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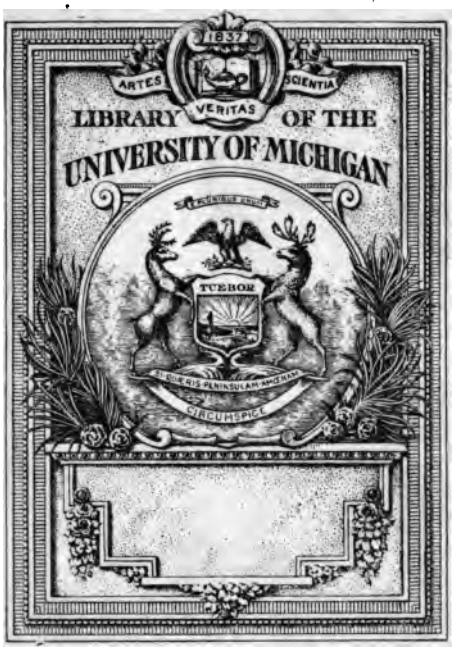
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THE WORKS

OF

HENRIK IBSEN

EMPEROR AND GALILEAN

A WORLD-HISTORIC DRAMA

A DOLL'S HOUSE

GHOSTS

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY

WILLIAM ARCHER

JEFFERSON PRESS

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EMPEROR AND GALILEAN

EMPEROR AND GALILEAN

INTRODUCTION *

In a speech delivered at Copenhagen in 1898, Ibsen said: "It is now thirty-four years since I journeyed southward by way of Germany and Austria, and passed through the Alps on May 9. Over the mountains the clouds hung like a great dark curtain. We plunged in under it, steamed through the tunnel, and suddenly found ourselves at Miramare, where the beauty of the South, a strange luminosity, shining like white marble, suddenly revealed itself to me, and left its mark on my whole subsequent production, even though it may not all have taken the form of beauty." Whatever else may have had its origin in this memorable moment of revelation, *Emperor and Galilean* certainly sprang from it. The poet felt an irresistible impulse to let his imagination loose in the Mediterranean world of sunshine and marble that had suddenly burst upon him. Antiquity sprang to life before his mental vision, and he felt that he must capture and perpetuate the shining pageant in the medium of his art. We see throughout the play how constantly the element of external picturesqueness was present to his mind. Though it has only once or twice found its

* Copyright 1907, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

way to the stage,[1] it is nevertheless—for good and for ill—a great piece of scene-painting.

It did not take him long to decide upon the central figure for his picture. What moved him, as it must move every one who brings to Rome the smallest scintilla of imagination, was the spectacle of a superb civilisation, a polity of giant strength and radiant beauty, obliterated, save for a few pathetic fragments, and overlaid by forms of life in many ways so retrograde and inferior. The Rome of the sixties, even more than the Rome of to-day, was a standing monument to the triumph of mediævalism over antiquity. The poet who would give dramatic utterance to the emotions engendered by this spectacle must almost inevitably pitch upon the decisive moment in the transition—and Ibsen found that moment in the reaction of Julian. He attributed to it more "world-historic" import than the sober historian is disposed to allow it. Gaetano Negri[2] shows very clearly (what, indeed, is plain enough in Gibbon) that Julian's action had not the critical importance which Ibsen assigns it. His brief reign produced, as nearly as possible, no effect at all upon the evolution of Christianity. None the less is it true that Julian made a spiritual struggle of what had been, to his predecessors, a mere question of politics, one might almost say of police. Never until his day did the opposing forces confront each other in full consciousness of what was at stake; and never after his day had

[1] It was acted at the Leipzig Stadttheater, December 5, 1896, and at the Belle-Alliance Theater, Berlin, on the occasion of the poet's seventieth birthday, in March 1898. It must, of course, have been enormously cut down.

[2] *Julian the Apostate.* 2 vols. New York, 1905.

they even the semblance of equality requisite to give the struggle dramatic interest. As a dramatist, then—whatever the historian may say—Ibsen chose his protagonist with unerring instinct. Julian was the last, and not the least, of the heroes of antiquity.

Ibsen arrived in Rome in the middle of June 1864. At the beginning of July he went into summer quarters at Genzano; and there he found his friend Lorenz Dietrichson, who writes in his book entitled *Bygone Days* (Vol. I, p. 336):—"In the afternoon, we generally lay reading or chatting under the trees on one of the hillsides overlooking the Lake of Nemi. I remember especially one day when I read to him Ammianus Marcellinus's description of Julian the Apostate's campaigns, which interested him greatly. We fell to talking about Julian, and I know that on that day the idea of treating this subject dramatically first took serious hold on his mind. At any rate, he said at the end of our talk that he hoped no one would get ahead of him in dealing with it." About two months later he wrote to Björnson (September 16, 1864): "I am busied with a long poem, and have in preparation a tragedy, *Julianus Apostata*, a piece of work which I set about with intense gusto, and in which I believe I shall succeed. I hope to have both finished next spring, or, at any rate, in the course of the summer." As regards *Julianus Apostata*, this hope was very far astray, for nine years elapsed before the play was finished.[1] Not until May 4, 1866, is the project again

[1] The poem was never finished at all. It is doubtless the "epic *Brand*," a fragment of which was published in 1907. See Introductions to *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*.

mentioned, when Ibsen writes to his friend, Michael Birkeland, that, though the Danish poet, Hauch, has in the meantime produced a play on the same theme, he does not intend to abandon it. On May 21, 1866, he writes to his publisher, Hegel, that, now that *Brand* is out of hand, he is still undecided what subject to tackle next. "I feel more and more disposed," he says, "to set to work in earnest at *Kejser Julian*, which I have had in mind for two years." He feels sure that Hauch's conception of the subject must be entirely different from his; and he does not intend to read Hauch's play. On July 22, 1866, he writes from Frascati to Paul Botten-Hansen that he is "wrestling with a subject and knows that he will soon get the upper hand of the brute." His German editors take this to refer to *Emperor and Galilean*, and they are probably right; but it is not quite certain. The work he actually produced was *Peer Gynt;* and we know that he had a third subject in mind at the time. We hear no more of Julian until October 28, 1870, when, in his autobiographic letter to Peter Hansen, he writes from Dresden: ". . . Here I live in a tediously well-ordered community. What will become of me when at last I actually reach home! I must seek salvation in remoteness of subject, and think of attacking *Kejser Julian.*"

This was, in fact, to be his next work; but two years and a half were still to pass before he finally "got the upper hand of the brute." On January 18, 1871, he writes to Hegel: "Your supposition that *Julian* is so far advanced that it may go to the printers next month arises from a misunderstanding. The first part is finished; I am working at the second part; but the third

part is not even begun. This third part will, however, go comparatively quickly, and I confidently hope to place the whole in your hands by the month of June." This is the first mention we have of the division into three parts, which he ultimately abandoned. If Hegel looked for the manuscript in June, he looked in vain. On July 12 Ibsen wrote to him: "Now for the reason of my long silence: I am hard at work on *Kejser Julian*. This book will be my chief work, and it is engrossing all my thoughts and all my time. That positive view of the world which the critics have so long been demanding of me, they will find here." Then he asks Hegel to procure for him three articles on Julian by Pastor Listov, which had appeared in the Danish paper, *Fœdrelandet*, and enquires whether there is in Danish any other statement of the *facts* of Julian's career. "I have Neander's German works on the subject; also D. Strauss's; but the latter's book contains nothing but argumentative figments,[1] and that sort of thing I can do myself. It is facts that I require." His demand for more facts, even at this stage of the proceedings, shows that his work must still have been in a pretty fluid state.

Two months later (September 24, 1871) Ibsen wrote to Brandes, who had apparently been urging him to "hang out a banner" or nail his colours to the mast: "While I have been busied upon *Julian*, I have become, in a way, a fatalist; and yet this play will be a sort of a banner. Do not be afraid, however, of any tendency-nonsense: I look at the characters, at the conflicting designs, at *his-*

[1] It was, in fact, a pamphlet aimed at Frederick William IV. of Prussia, and entitled *A Romanticist on the Throne of the Caesars.*

tory, and do not concern myself with the 'moral' of it all. Of course, you will not confound the moral of history with its philosophy; for that must inevitably shine forth as the final verdict on the conflicting and conquering forces." On December 27 (still from Dresden) he writes to Hegel: "My new work goes steadily forward. The first part, *Julian and the Philosophers*, in three acts, is already copied out. . . . I am busily at work upon the second part, which will go quicker and be considerably shorter; the third part, on the other hand, will be somewhat longer." To the same correspondent, on April 24, 1872, he reports the second part almost finished. "The third and last part," he says, "will be mere child's play. The spring has now come, and the warm season is my best time for working." To Brandes, on May 31, he writes, "I go on wrestling with *Julian*"; and on July 23 (from Berchtesgaden) "That monster Julian has still such a grip of me that I cannot shake him off." On August 8 he announces to Hegel that he has "completed the second part of the trilogy. The first part, *Julian and the Philosophers*, a play in three acts, will make about a hundred printed pages. The second part, *Julian's Apostasy*, a play in three acts, of which I am now making a fair copy, will be of about equal length. The third play, *Julian on the Imperial Throne*, will run to five acts, and my preparations for it are so far advanced that I shall get it out of hand very much quicker than the others. What I have done forms a whole in itself, and could quite well be published separately; but for the sake of the complete impression I think it most advisable that all three plays should appear together."

Two months later (October 14) the poet is back in Dresden, and writes as follows to a new and much-valued friend, Mr. Edmund Gosse: "I am working daily at *Julianus Apostata*, and . . . hope that it may meet with your approval. I am putting into this book a part of my own spiritual life; what I depict, I have, under other forms, myself gone through, and the historic theme I have chosen has also a much closer relation to the movements of our own time than one might at first suppose. I believe such a relation to be indispensable to every modern treatment of so remote a subject, if it is, as a poem, to arouse interest." In a somewhat later letter to Mr. Gosse he says: "I have kept strictly to history. . . . And yet I have put much self-anatomy into this book."

In February, 1873, the play was finished. On the 4th of that month, Ibsen writes to his old friend Ludvig Daae that he is on the point of beginning his fair copy of what he can confidently say will be his "Hauptwerk," and wants some guidance as to the proper way of spelling Greek names. Oddly enough, he is still in search of facts, and asks for information as to the *Vita Maximi* of Eunapius, which has not been accessible to him. Two days later (February 6) he writes to Hegel: "I have the great pleasure of being able to inform you that my long work is finished—and more to my satisfaction than any of my earlier works. The book is entitled *Emperor and Galilean, a World-Drama in Two Parts.* It contains: Part First, *Caesar's Apostasy,* play in five acts (170 pp.); Part Second, *The Emperor Julian,* play in five acts (252 pp.). . . . Owing to the growth of the idea during the process of composition, I shall have to make another

fair copy of the first play. But it will not become longer in the process; on the contrary, I hope to reduce it by about twenty pages. . . . This play has been to me a labour of Hercules—not the actual composition: that has been easy—but the effort it has cost me to live myself into a fresh and visual realisation of so remote and so unfamiliar an age." On February 23, he writes to Ludvig Daae, discussing further the orthography of the Greek names, and adding: "My play deals with a struggle between two irreconcilable powers in the life of the world—a struggle which will always repeat itself. Because of this universality, I call the book 'a world-historic drama.' For the rest, there is in the character of Julian, as in most that I have written during my riper years, more of my own spiritual experience than I care to acknowledge to the public. But it is at the same time an entirely realistic piece of work. The figures stood solidly before my eyes in the light of their time—and I hope they will so stand before the readers' eyes."

The book was not published until the autumn (October 16, 1873). On September 8, Ibsen wrote to Brandes that he was daily expecting its appearance. "I hear from Norway," he went on, "that Björnson, though he cannot know anything about the book, has declared it to be 'Atheism,' adding that it was inevitable it should come to that with me. What the book is or is not I won't attempt to decide; I only know that I have energetically seen a fragment of the history of humanity, and what I saw I have tried to reproduce." On the very day of the book's appearance, he again writes to Brandes from Dresden: "The direction public affairs have taken in these

parts gives this poem an actuality I myself had not foreseen."

A second edition of *Emperor and Galilean* appeared in December, 1873. In the following January Ibsen writes to Mr. Gosse, who had expressed some regret at his abandonment of verse: "The illusion I wished to produce was that of reality. I wished to leave on the reader's mind the impression that what he had read had actually happened. By employing verse I should have counteracted my own intention. . . . The many everyday, insignificant characters, whom I have intentionally introduced, would have become indistinct and mixed up with each other had I made them all speak in rhythmic measure. We no longer live in the days of Shakespeare. . . . The style ought to conform to the degree of ideality imparted to the whole presentment. My play is no tragedy in the ancient acceptation. My desire was to depict human beings and tnerefore I would not make them speak the language of the gods." A year later (January 30, 1875) he thus answers a criticism by George Brandes: "I cannot but find an inconsistency between your disapproval of the doctrine of necessity contained in my book, and your approval of something very similar in Paul Heyse's *Kinder der Welt*. For in my opinion it comes to much the same thing whether, in writing of a person's character, I say 'It runs in his blood' or 'He is free—under necessity.'"

An expression in the same letter throws light on the idea which may be called the keystone of the arch of thought erected in this play. "Only entire nations," Ibsen writes, "can join in great intellectual movements. A change of front in our conception of life and of the

world is no parochial matter; and we Scandinavians, as compared with other European nations, have not yet got beyond the parish-council standpoint. But nowhere do you find a parish-council anticipating and furthering 'the third empire.' " To the like effect runs a passage in a speech delivered at Stockholm, September 24, 1887: "I have sometimes been called a pessimist: and indeed I am one, inasmuch as I do not believe in the eternity of human ideals. But I am also an optimist, inasmuch as I fully and confidently believe in the ideal's power of propagation and of development. Especially and definitely do I believe that the ideals of our time, as they pass away, are tending towards that which, in my drama of *Emperor and Galilean*, I have designated as 'the third empire.' Let me therefore drain my glass to the growing, the coming time."

The latest (so far as I know) of Ibsen's references to this play is perhaps the most significant of all. It occurs in a letter to the Danish-German scholar, Julius Hoffory, written from Munich, February 26, 1888: "*Emperor and Galilean* is not the first work I wrote in Germany, but doubtless the first that I wrote under the influence of German spiritual life. When, in the autumn of 1868, I came from Italy to Dresden, I brought with me the plan of *The League of Youth*, and wrote that play in the following winter. During my four years' stay in Rome, I had merely made various historical studies, and taken sundry notes, for *Emperor and Galilean;* I had not sketched out any definite plan, much less written any of it. My view of life was still at that time, National-Scandinavian, wherefore I could not master the foreign material. Then, in Germany, I lived through the great

time, the year of the war, and the development which followed it. This brought with it for me, at many points, an impulse of transformation. My conception of world-history and of human life had hitherto been a national one. It now widened into a racial conception; and then I could write *Emperor and Galilean.*"

The sketches and drafts of the "world-historic drama," published in Ibsen's *Literary Remains*, are so significant, both technically and as throwing light on the process of his thoughts, that they deserve a far more detailed study than I can here devote to them. Some day, no doubt, we shall see a parallel-text edition with a full commentary, probably by a German scholar. In the meantime, all one can do is to note some of the salient points of difference and development.

The first jottings which have come down to us are merely some extracts from historians, and historical memoranda as to the leading characters. Then comes this curious fragment:—

THE PROLOGUE

(BEHIND THE CURTAIN)

The scene is the firmament over the yawning abyss. To the right, light and radiance; to the left, the dark.

(A starry night; the spirits of the dead float upwards; the demons of darkness hold them by threads; they sink exhausted——)

(Christmas night. The Imperial City by the Bosphorus. All the churches are festally illuminated; psalm-singing; thousands crowd in.)

Presumably we may take "behind the curtain" to mean that the poet vaguely designed some sort of poetic-spectacular overture,[1] like Goethe's "Prologue in Heaven," but did not wish that any attempt should be made to perform it. The idea of falling stars representing the return to earth of souls which try in vain to reach heaven reappears in a speech of Julian's in the draft of Act I, but has vanished from the final form.

Then come brief and somewhat disjointed narrative outlines of the story, act by act, interspersed here and there with references to historical authorities, chiefly Ammian and M. Albert de Broglie. These notes evidently date from different periods, and represent different phases in the development of the idea. Most of the outlines for the First Play (*Caesar's Apostasy*) are more or less worked over and remodelled; the action of the Second Play (*The Emperor Julian*) on the other hand, appears to have been conceived from the outset in practically its final form. There is not very much to be learnt from these sketches. Perhaps the most curious point in them occurs in the notes for Act III of *Caesar's Apostasy*, the scene in Ephesus. After mention has been made of the vision of Apollinaris of Sidon concerning the purple robe, the next sentence runs: "Julian expounds [to Gregory and Basil] how the individual has to go through the phases of development of the race." One is rather surprised that this idea should have been present to Ibsen's mind in or about 1870, and much more to find Julian enunciating it fifteen centuries earlier. There seems to

[1] The word translated "Prologue," means, literally, "Foreplay."

be no trace of it in the dialogue either of the drafts or of the finished play,

Coming now from narrative outlines to dramatised drafts, we find the first act fully blocked out in a form not essentially different from that which it finally assumed. Ibsen did not, in rewriting, alter its structure, but only expanded and polished it. Agathon appears under the name of Theodorus, and the wrangling sectarians of the opening scene are unnamed, figuring merely as First, Second and Third Church-goers. The second act, in Athens, is much more summarily indicated, and there are large and important gaps in the dialogue; but the completed act nowhere departs substantially from the lines indicated in the draft. In the draft of the third act, on the other hand, there are some interesting divergences from the finished form. For instance, we find that the dream which forewarns Julian of the coming of Gregory and Basil was an afterthought. In the first sketch they arrive unheralded. The change probably indicates a wish to strike from the outset a note of mystery and supernaturalism. Julian's vision of the ship floating in the void appears practically as in the final text. His fancy that he is a new Adam, destined to mate with Basil's sister Makrina for the propagation of a new race, is clearly indicated in the draft, but without any reference to Moses, Alexander or Jesus. On the other hand, he tries to show the necessity for a new race by an argument which has disappeared from the final text. "Oh, do you not see," he cries, "the whole of this generation will perish. Pestilence will lay waste the cities, locusts and drought will spread famine over every land, the sea will

Presumably we may take "behind the curtain" to mean that the poet vaguely designed some sort of poetic-spectacular overture,[1] like Goethe's "Prologue in Heaven," but did not wish that any attempt should be made to perform it. The idea of falling stars representing the return to earth of souls which try in vain to reach heaven reappears in a speech of Julian's in the draft of Act I, but has vanished from the final form.

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[1] The word translated "Prologue," means, literally, "

burst its barriers and sweep over islands and shores." The suppression of this burst of madness was certainly judicious. In the scene of the visions, there are two long and regrettable gaps, the first including the whole dialogue with the Voice in the Light, the second the colloquies with Cain and Judas. The original form of Maximus's exposition of the three empires is somewhat different from that which it finally assumed. It runs as follows:—

JULIAN. What is the empire?

MAXIMUS. There are three empires. . . . First came the empire of matter, which was founded by the serpent in the tree of knowledge. Then the empire of the spirit; it was founded by the great prophet of Nazareth.——

JULIAN. That empire is eternal.

MAXIMUS. It is on the point of falling, I tell you. The prophet's hour has struck. Those two empires shall be swallowed up in the third, which is now at hand. In that, spirit shall leaven matter and matter spirit—and then the goal is reached.

JULIAN. What is the goal, wise master?

MAXIMUS. That the creature shall become one with the creator, the creator with the creature.

The prophecy that Julian is to "establish the empire" does not appear in the draft, for its place is in one of the missing passages; but doubtless it was part of Ibsen's first conception of the scene, for the phrase is duly underlined in the message from Constantius at the close of the act. As this was originally to have ended the first play of the contemplated trilogy, the final situation is, in the

draft, more emphatic than it ultimately became. Terrified at the prospect of Julian's elevation to the purple, Basil offers to give him Makrina if he will refuse it; and (in one of the two extant versions) it is only then that the Emperor's messenger hands Julian the letter offering him the hand of Helena. Thus Julian has to make a decisive choice, and, in choosing Helena, breaks away from the influences which might have reconciled him to Christianity. But this antithesis is in reality hollow and artificial. The breach between Julian and "the prophet of Nazareth" is already too wide to be healed by Makrina or any one else; and it was perhaps a realisation of this fact that led Ibsen to suppress the offer of Makrina's hand, and to deprive the situation of the undue importance which would have been accorded it had he made it the end, not merely of an act, but of a play.

Had he adhered to his original design, the title of this first part, as we have seen, was to have been *Julian and the Philosophers*. The second part, *Julian's Apostasy*, was to have differed very considerably from the fourth and fifth acts as they now stand. The present fourth act represents two acts of the original version, which were broken up into no fewer than seven different scenes. The first takes place in Julian's tent, before the battle at Argentoratum. It emphasises the perverse sensuality of Helena, who begs Julian to hand over to her the female captives after the victory, in order that she may either convert them to Christianity or kill them and renew her youth by bathing in their blood. In the second and third scenes we see the crisis of the battle and the victory. In

the fourth scene Helena again appears, and we have a further illustration of her temperament in her intense admiration for the thews and sinews of the barbarian king, Knodomar, and her desire that Julian should torture him, mentally if not physically. The second act, divided into three scenes, takes place in Paris and is roughly similar to the fourth act of the finished play. Its chief interest lies in the greater clearness, amounting almost to crudity, with which Ibsen portrays the morbid mingling of superstition and sensuality in Helena's soul. Her ravings show unmistakably that she believes the lover to whom her condition is due to have been, almost in physical fact, the Being whose stigmata she adores; so that the meaning of Julian's cry of "Galilean!" becomes doubly evident. The third act, as originally planned, was practically the same as the fifth act of the completed play. The brief and fragmentary draft of it which we possess is headed "Fifth Act," showing that it must have been written after Ibsen had abandoned the division into three parts.

We have narrative schemes, but no dramatic versions, of the five acts of the second play. Evidently the poet carried them out exactly as he first planned them—to the detriment, one cannot but believe, of the drama as a whole. The Danish novelist Bergsöe recalls a conversation with Ibsen in which he rather vehemently declared his intention of writing a play in nine acts. This indicates pretty clearly that he at first conceived the symmetrical scheme of three plays of three acts each. Had he been able to carry this out, so far, at least, as to reduce by two the five acts of *The Emperor Julian*, he would

doubtless have given us a more thoroughly vitalised work of art.

We have seen that, at the time of its completion, Ibsen confidently regarded *Emperor and Galilean* as his masterpiece. It is the habit of many artists always to think their last work their best; but there is nothing to show that this was one of Ibsen's foibles. Moreover, even towards the end of his life, when the poet was asked by Professor Schofield, of Harvard, what work he considered his greatest, he replied, *Èmperor and Galilean.* If this was his deliberate and lasting opinion, we have here another curious instance of the tendency, so frequent among authors, to capricious over-valuation of one or another of their less successful efforts. Certainly we should be very sorry to miss this splendid fresco of the decadent Empire from the list of Ibsen's works; but neither technically nor intellectually—unless I am very much mistaken—can it rank among his masterpieces.

Of all historical plays it is perhaps the most strictly historical. Apart from some unimportant chronological rearrangements, the main lines of Julian's career are reproduced with extraordinary fidelity. The individual occurrences of the first play are for the most part invented, and the dialogue freely composed; but the second play is a mere mosaic of historical or legendary incidents, while a large part of the dialogue is taken, almost word for word, either from Julian's own writings, or from other historical or quasi-historical documents. I will try to distinguish briefly between the elements of history and fiction in the first play; in the second there is practi-

cally no fiction, save the fictions of Gregory and the ecclesiastical historians.

The details of the first act have no historical foundation. Gallus was not appointed Caesar on any such occasion as Ibsen describes; and there seems to be no hint of any intrigue between him and Helena. The character of Agathon is fictitious, though all that is related of Julian's life in Cappadocia is historical. The meeting with Libanius is an invention; and it was to Nicomedia, not to Pergamus, that Julian was sent shortly after the elevation of his brother to the second place in the Empire.

The chronological order of the events on which the second and third acts are founded is reversed by Ibsen. Julian fell under the influence of Maximus before ever he went to Athens. Eunapius relates his saying, "I go where torches light themselves, and where statues smile," or words to that effect; but they were spoken at Pergamus to Chrysantius, a Neo-Platonist, who, while deprecating the thaumaturgic methods of Maximus, averred that he himself had witnessed this marvel. For the details of the symposium at Ephesus there is no foundation, though Gregory and others relate weird legends of supernatural experiences which Julian underwent at the instance of Maximus. Not till after the disgrace and death of Gallus did Julian proceed to Athens, where he did not study under Libanius. Indeed, I cannot discover that he ever personally encountered Libanius before his accession to the throne. It is true that Gregory and Basil were his fellow-students at Athens; but the tender friendship which Ibsen represents as existing between them is certainly imaginary.

All the military events at Paris, and the story of Julian's victory over Knodomar, are strictly historical. Helena however, did not die at Paris, but at Vienne, after her husband had assumed the purple. Her death was said to have been indirectly due to a jealous machination of the Empress Eusebia; but the incident of the poisoned fruit is quite fictitious, and equally so are the vague enormities revealed in the dying woman's delirium. From the fact that Julian is strangely silent about his wife, we may conjecture that their marriage was not a happy one; but this is all the foundation Ibsen had to build upon.[1]

For the scene in the Catacombs at Vienne there is nothing that can fairly be called a historic basis. It is true that, after assuming the purple, Julian did at one time endanger his position by shutting himself away from his soldiery; it is true, or at least it is related, that Julian "brought from Greece into Gaul the high priest of the mysteries—the Hierophant, as he was called [not Maximus]—and did not decide to rebel until he had, with the greatest secrecy, accomplished the prescribed sacred

[1] I may, perhaps, be excused for quoting at this point an extract from a review of Negri's *Julian the Apostate*, in which I tried to summarise the reasons of Julian's hatred of Christianity: "Firstly, he was unmoved by the merits of the Christian ethic, even where it coincided with his own, because he saw it so flagrantly ignored by the corrupt Christianity of his day. A puritan in the purple, he was morally too Christian to be a Christian of the fourth-century Church. Secondly, he hated the pessimism of Christianity—that very throwing-forward of its hopes to the life beyond the grave which so eminently fitted it to a period of social catastrophe and dissolution. He found its heaven and hell vulgar and contemptible, and regarded the average Christian as a sort of spiritual brandy-tippler, who rejected for a crude stimulant and anodyne, the delicate lemonade of Neo-Platonic polytheism. Thirdly, he resented what he called the "atheism" of Christianity, its elimination of the

rites." There is also a vague, and probably mythical, report of his having gone through some barbarous ceremony of purification, in order to wipe out the stain of his baptism. On such slight suggestions did Ibsen build up the elaborate fabric of his fifth act, The character of Sallust, like that of Oribases, is historical: but of any approach to double-dealing on the part of the excellent Sallust there is no hint. As there is no foundation for the infidelity of the living Helena, so there is no foundation for the part played by Helena dead in determining Julian's apostasy.

While Ibsen invents, however, he does not falsify; it is when he ceases to invent (paradoxically enough) that falsification sets in. In all essentials, this first play is a representation of the youth of Julian as just as it is vivid. His character is very truly portrayed—his intellectual and moral earnestness, his superstition, his vanity, his bravery, his military genius. The individual scenes are full of poetic and dramatic inspiration. There may be some question, indeed, as to the artistic legitimacy of the employment of the supernatural in the third act; but of its

divine from Nature, leaving it inanimate and chilly. Fourthly, like the earlier Emperors, he deemed Christianity anti-social, and the Christian potentially and probably, if not actually, a bad citizen of the Empire. Fifthly, he hated the aggressive intolerance of Christianity, its inability to live and let live, its polemical paroxysms, and iconoclastic frenzies. . . . These were the main elements in his anti-Christianity; and yet they are not, taken together, quite sufficient to account for the measureless scorn with which he invariably speaks of 'Galileans.' One cannot but feel that Christianity must have done him some personal injury, not clearly known to us. Was he simply humiliated by the hypocrisy he had had to practise in his boyhood and youth? Or was Ibsen right in divining some painful mystery behind his certainly unsatisfactory relations with his Christian consort, Helena?"

imaginative power there can be no doubt. The drama progresses in an ever-ascending scale of interest, from the idyllic-spectacular opening, through the philosophic second act, the mystic third act, the stirring and terrible fourth act, up to the magnificent poetic melodrama of the fifth. In a slightly old-fashioned, romantic style, the play is as impressive to the imagination as it is, in all essentials, faithful to historic fact.

When Julian has ascended the throne, a wholly different method of treatment sets in. We could almost guess from internal evidence, what Ibsen's letters prove to be the fact—that he underwent a decisive change of mental attitude during the process of composition. The original first part, we see (that is to say the three-act play which was to have been called *Julian and the Philosophers*) was finished some time before January 18, 1871, on which date he tells Hegel that he is already at work on the second part. But January 18, 1871, was the very day on which, at Versailles, the King of Prussia was proclaimed German Emperor; so that the first part must have been written before the Imperialisation of Germany was even to be foreseen. While the poet was engaged upon the second part of the "trilogy" he then designed, he was doubtless brooding over the great event of January 18, and gradually realising its nature and consequences. That change in his mental attitude was taking place, which in his letter to Hoffory (p. 12) he described as the transition from a national to a racial standpoint. While in January he "confidently hopes" to have the whole play finished in June, July finds him, to all appearance, no further advanced, and (very significantly) asking for

"facts"—documents of detail—whereof, in writing the first play, he had felt no need. At the same time he tells Hegel that the critics will find in the play that positive view of the world for which they have long been clamouring—a *Weltanschauung*, we may fairly conjecture, at which he has arrived during the six months' interval since his last letter.

What, then, was that "positive view"? It can have been nothing else than the theory of the "third empire," which is to absorb both Paganism and Christianity, and is to mark, as it were, the maturity of the race, in contrast to its Pagan childhood and its Christian adolescence. (Compare the scene between Julian and Maximus at the end of Part II. Act III.) The analogy between this theory and the Nietzschean conception of the "Overman" need not here be emphasised. It is sufficient to note that Ibsen had come to conceive world-history as moving, under the guidance of a Will which works through blinded, erring, and sacrificed human instruments, towards a "third empire," in which the jarring elements of flesh and spirit shall be reconciled.

It may seem like a play on the word "empire" to connect this concept with the establishment in January, 1871 of a political confederation of petty States, compared with which even Julian's "orbis terrarum" was a world-empire indeed. But there is ample proof that in Ibsen's mind political unification, the formation of large aggregates inspired by a common idea, figured as a preliminary to the coming of the "third empire." In no other sense can we read the letters to Hoffory and Brandes cited

above (pp. 10, and 12); and I give in a foot-note[1] a reference to other passages of similar tenor. "But Julian," it may be said, "represented precisely the ideal of political cohesion which was revived in the unification of Germany; why, then, should Ibsen, in writing the second play, have (so to speak) turned against his hero?" The reason, I think, was that Ibsen had come to feel that a loose political unity could be of little avail without the spiritual fusion implied in a world-religion; and this fusion it was Julian's tragic error to oppose. He was a political imperialist by inheritance and as a matter of course; but what he really cared for, the point on which he bent his will, was the restoration of polytheism with all its local cults. And here Ibsen parted company with him. He sympathised to the full with Julian's rebellion against certain phases of Christianity—against book-worship, death-worship, other-worldliness, hypocrisy, intolerance. He had himself gone through this phase of feeling. During his first years in Rome, he had seen the ruins of the ancient world of light and glory sicklied o'er with the pale cast of mediaevalism; and he had ardently sympathised with Julian's passionate resentment against the creed which had defamed and defaced the old beauty in the name of a truth that was so radically corrupted as to be

[1] For the letter to Hoffory, see *Correspondence*, Letter 198. The letter to Brandes is numbered 115. See also letters to Hegel (177) and to Brandes (206). I may also refer to an extract from Ibsen's common-place book, published in the *Die neue Rundschau*, December 1906, in which he says, "We laugh at the four-and-thirty fatherlands of Germany: but the four-and-thirty fatherlands of Europe are equally ridiculous. North America is content with one, or—for the present—with two." For a somewhat fuller treatment of this subject, see the *Nineteenth Century and After*, February 1907.

no longer true. In this mood he had conceived and in great measure executed the First Part, as we now possess it. But further study of detail, in the light of that new political conception which had arisen out of the events of 1870–71, had shown him that the secret of Julian's failure lay in the hopeless inferiority of the religion he championed to the religion he attacked. That religion, with all its corruptions, came to seem a necessary stage in the evolution of humanity; and the poet asked himself, perhaps, whether he, any more than Julian, had even now a more practical substitute to offer in its place. In this sense, I take it, we must read his repeated assertion that he had put into the play much of his own "spiritual experience." In the concept of the "third empire" he found, I repeat, the keystone to his arch of thought, to which everything else must be brought into due relation. It entirely dominated and conditioned the whole of the second play.

But what was the effect of the concept? It was to make Julian a plaything in the hands of some power, some implicitly-postulated World-Will, working slowly, deviously, but relentlessly towards a far-off dimly-divined consummation. Christianity, no doubt, was also an instrument of this power; but it was an instrument predestined (for the moment) to honourable uses, while its opponent was fated to dishonour. Thus the process of the Second Part is a gradual sapping of Julian's intelligence and power of moral discrimination; while the World-Will, acting always on the side of Christianity, becomes indistinguishable from the mechanical Providence of the vulgar melodramatist.

Whatever we may think of the historical or philosophical value of the theory of the "third empire," there can be little doubt that its effect upon the play has been artistically disastrous. It has led Ibsen to cog the dice against Julian in a way from which even a Father of the Church might have shrunk. He has not only accepted uncritically all the invectives of Gregory, and the other Christian assailants of "Antichrist," but he has given to many historic events a fictitious twist, and always to Julian's disadvantage.[1]

It would need a volume to apply to each incident of the Second Part the test of critical examination. I must be content with a rough outline of the distorting effect of the poet's preoccupation with his "world-historic" idea.

In the first place, he makes Julian much more of a persecutor than even his enemies allege him to have been. Nothing is more certain than that Julian was sincerely convinced of the inefficacy of violence as a means of conversion, and keenly alive to the impolicy of conferring upon his opponents the distinction of martyrdom. Tried by the standards of his age, he was a marvellously humane man. Compared with his uncle Constantine, his cousin Constantius, his brother Gallus—to go no further back among wearers of the purple—he seems like a being of another race. It is quite true, as his enemies allege, that his clemency was politic as well as humane; but, whatever its motives, it was real and consistent. Gregory, while trying to make him out a monster, explicitly and

[1] He has also, I think, taken too seriously Julian's ironic self-caricature in the *Misopogon*.

repeatedly complains that he denied to Christians the crown of martyrdom. Saint Jerome speaks of his "blanda persecutio"—persecution by methods of mildness. The worst that can be alleged against him is a lack of diligence in punishing popular outrages upon the Christians (generally of the nature of reprisals) which occurred here and there under his rule. That he incited to such riots is nowhere alleged; and it is difficult to judge whether his failure to repress them was due to malicious inertia or to actual lack of power. The policing of the empire cannot have been an easy matter, and Julian was occupied, during the whole of his brief reign, in concentrating his forces for the Persian expedition. It cannot be pretended that his tolerance rose to the pitch of impartiality. He favoured Pagans, and he more or less oppressed Christians; though a considerable part of his alleged oppression lay in the withdrawal of extravagant privileges conferred on them by his predecessors. In his attempt to undo some of the injustices that Christians had committed during their forty years of predominance—such as the seizure of temple glebes and so forth—he was doubtless guilty, on his own account, of more than one injustice. Wrong breeds wrong, and, in a time of religious dissolution and reconstruction, equity is always at the mercy of passion, resentment and greed. There was even, in some of Julian's proceedings, a sort of perfidy and insolence that must have been peculiarly galling to the Christians. It would not be altogether unjust to accuse him of having instituted against the new religion a campaign of chicanery; but that is something wholly different from a campaign of blood. The alleged "martyr-

doms" of his reign are few in number,[1] are recounted by late and prejudiced authorities, are accompanied by all the manifestly fabulous details characteristic of such stories, and are none of them, with the smallest show of credibility, laid to the account of Julian himself.

But what is the impression we receive from Ibsen? We are given to understand that Julian drifted into a campaign of sanguinary atrocity, full of horrors as great as those recorded or imagined of the persecutions under Decius or Diocletian. It is made to seem, moreover, that he was personally concerned in some of the worst of these horrors. We are asked to conceive his life as being passed with the mingled shrieks and psalms of his victims ringing in his ears. He is made to gloat in imagination over their physical agonies. ("Where are the Galileans now? Some under the executioner's hands, others flying through the narrow streets, ashy pale with terror, their eyes starting from their heads," &c., &c.; p. 314). He is haunted in his last hours by ghastly visions of whole troops of martyrs. Moreover, his persecutions are made particularly hateful by the fact that they either fall upon or threaten his personal friends. The companion of his childhood, Agathon (a fictitious personage), is goaded by remorseless cruelty to that madness which eventually makes him the assassin of Antichrist. Gregory of Nazianzus is first made (what he never was) Julian's most cherished comrade, and is then shown as doing what he never did—playing a noble and heroic

[1] Between fifteen and twenty are enumerated by Allard (*Julien l'Apostat*), a writer who gravely reproduces the most extravagant figments of the hagiographers.

part in personally defying the tyrant. Mad and monstrous designs are attributed to Julian, such as that of searching out (with the aid of tortures) and destroying all the writings of the Christians. This trait appears to be suggested by a letter from Julian to the Prefect of Egypt enjoining him to collect and preserve all the books which had belonged to George, Bishop of Alexandria: "He had many of them concerning philosophy and rhetoric, and many of them that contained the doctrines of the impious Galileans. I would willingly see the last-named all destroyed, if I did not fear that some good and useful books might, at the same time, be destroyed by mistake. Make, therefore, the most minute search concerning them. In this search the secretary of George may be of great help to you. . . . But if he try to deceive you in this affair, submit him immediately to the torture." It is needless to remark upon the difference between a rhetorical wish that all the Christian books in a particular library might be destroyed, and an actual attempt to annihilate all the Christian writings in the world. Thus not only are the clearest evidences of Julian's abstention from violence disregarded, but all sorts of minor incidents are misrepresented to his disadvantage.

A particularly grave injustice to his character meets us almost on the threshold of the Second Part. The execution of the Treasurer, Ursulus, by the military tribunal which Julian appointed on coming to the throne, is condemned by all historians and was regretted by Julian himself. No doubt he was culpably remiss in not preventing it; but Ibsen, without the slightest warrant, gives his conduct a peculiarly odious character in

making it appear that he deliberately sacrificed the old man to his resentment of a blow administered to his vanity in the matter of the Easter Ambassadors. There is nothing whatever to connect Ursulus with this incident.

The failure of Julian's effort to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem is a matter of unquestioned history. It is impossible now to determine, though it is easy to conjecture, what natural accidents were magnified by fanaticism into supernatural intervention. But what does Ibsen do? He is not even content with the comparatively rational account of the matter given by Gregory within a few months of its occurrence. He adopts Ammian's later and much exaggerated account; he makes Jovian, who had nothing to do with the affair, avouch it with the authority of an eye-witness; and, to give the miracle a still more purposeful significance, he represents it as the instrument of the conversion of Jovian, who was to be Julian's successor, and the undoer of his work. Under ordinary circumstances, this would be a quite admissible re-arrangement of history, designed to save the introduction of another character. But the very fact that the poet is, throughout the play, so obviously sacrificing dramatic economy and concentration to historic accuracy, renders this heightening of the alleged miracle something very like a falsification of evidence. It arises, of course, from no desire to be unjust to Julian, for whom Ibsen's sympathy remains unmistakable, but from a determination to make him the tragic victim of a World-Will pitilessly using him as an instrument to its far-off ends.

But this conception of a vague external power interfering at all sorts of critical moments to baffle designs of which, for one reason or another, it disapproves, belongs to the very essence of melodrama. Therefore the incident of the Temple of Jerusalem brings with it painful associations of *The Sign of the Cross;* and still more suggestive of that masterpiece is the downfall of the Temple of Apollo at Daphne which brings the second act of the Second Part to a close. Here the poet deliberately departs from history for the sake of a theatrical effect. The Temple of Apollo was not destroyed by an earthquake, nor in any way that even suggested a miracle. It was simply burnt to the ground; and though there was no evidence to show how the conflagration arose, the suspicion that it was the work of Christians cannot be regarded as wholly unreasonable.

An incident of which Ibsen quite uncritically accepts the accounts of Julian's enemies is his edict imposing what we should now call a test on the teachers in public (municipal) schools. This was probably an impolitic act; but an act of frantic tyranny it certainly was not. Homer and Hesiod were in Julian's eyes sacred books. They were the Scriptures of his religion; and he decreed that they should not be expounded to children, at the public expense, by "atheists" who (unless they were hypocrites as well) were bound to cast ridicule and contempt on them as religious documents. It is not as though Christians of that age could possibly have been expected to treat the Olympian divinities with the decent reverence with which even an agnostic teacher of to-day will speak of the Gospel story. Such tolerance was foreign

to the whole spirit of fourth-century Christianity. It was nothing if not intolerant; and the teacher would have been no good Christian who did not make his lessons the vehicle of proselytism. There is something a little paradoxical in the idea that tolerance should go the length of endowing the propagation of intolerance. It is quite false to represent Julian's measure as an attempt to deprive Christians of all instruction, and hurl them back into illiterate barbarism. He explicitly states that Christian children are as welcome as ever to attend the schools.

As the drama draws to a close, Ibsen shows his hero at every step more pitifully hoodwinked and led astray by the remorseless World-Will. He regains, towards the end, a certain tragic dignity, but it is at the expense of his sanity. "Quos deus vult perdere prius dementat." Now, there is no real evidence for the frenzied megalomania, the "Cäsarenwahn," which the poet attributes to Julian. It is not even certain that his conduct of the Persian expedition was so rash and desperate as it is represented to be. Gibbon (no blind partisan of Julian's) has shown that there is a case to be made even for the burning of the fleet. The mistake, perhaps, lay, not so much in burning it, as in having it there at all. Even as events fell out, the result of the expedition was by no means the greatest disaster that ever befell the Roman arms. The commonplace, self-indulgent Jovian brought the army off, ignominiously indeed, but in tolerable preservation. Had Julian lived, who knows but that the burning of the ships might now have ranked as one of the most brilliant audacities recorded in the annals of warfare?

It would be too much, perhaps, to expect any poet to resist the introduction of the wholly unhistoric "I am hammering the Emperor's coffin," and "Thou hast conquered, Galilean!" They certainly fell in too aptly with Ibsen's scheme for him to think of weighing their evidences. But one significant instance may be noted of the way in which he twists things to the detriment either of Julian's character or of his sanity. In the second scene of the fifth act, he makes Julian contemplate suicide by drowning, in the hope that, if his body disappeared, the belief would spread abroad that he had been miraculously snatched up into the communion of the gods. Now Gregory, it is true, mentions the design of suicide; but he mentions it as an incident of Julian's delirium *after* his wound. Gregory's virulence of hatred makes him at best a suspected witness; but even he did not hold Julian capable of so mad a fantasy before his intellect had been overthrown by physical suffering and fever.

Thus from step to step, throughout the Second Part, does Ibsen disparage and degrade his hero. It is not for me to discuss the value of the conception of the "third empire" to which poor Julian was sacrificed. But one thing we may say with confidence—namely, that the postulated World-Will does not work by such extremely melodramatic methods as those which Ibsen attributes to it. So far as its incidents are concerned, the Second Part might have been designed by a superstitious hagiologist, or a melodramatist desirous of currying favour with the clergy. Nay, it might almost seem as though the spirit of Gregory of Nazianzus—himself a dramatist after a fashion—had entered into Ibsen during the com-

position of the play. Certainly, if the World-Will decreed that Julian should be sacrificed in the cause of the larger Imperialism, it made of Ibsen, too, its instrument for completing the immolation.

In translating *Kejser og Galilæer* I was enabled (by arrangement) to avail myself of occasional aid from Miss Catherine Ray's version of the play, published in 1876. To Miss Ray belongs the credit of having been the first English translator of Ibsen, as Mr. Gosse was his first expositor. The text of my earlier rendering has been very carefully revised for the present edition.

One difficulty has encountered me at every turn. The Norwegians use only one word—*Riget* (German *das Reich*)—to cover the two ideas represented in English by "empire" and "kingdom." In most cases "empire" is clearly the proper rendering, since it would be absurd to speak in English of the Roman or the Byzantine Kingdom. But it would be no less impossible to say, in the Lord's Prayer, "Thine is the empire and the power and the glory." In the scene with Maximus in Ephesus, and in several other passages, I have used the word "empire" where "kingdom," in its Biblical sense, would have been preferable, were it not necessary to keep the analogy or contrast between the temporal and the spiritual "empire" clearly before the reader's mind. But at the end of the fifth act of *Caesar's Apostasy*, where the Lord's Prayer is interwoven with the dialogue, I have been forced to fall back on "kingdom." The reader, then, will please remember that these two words stand for one—*Riget*—in the original.

The verse from Homer quoted by Julian in the third act of the second play occurs in the twentieth book of the *Odyssey* (line 18). Ibsen prints the sentence which follows it as a second hexameter line; but either he or one of his authorities has apparently misread the passage in the treatise *Against the Cynic Heraclius*, on which this scene is founded. No such line occurs in Homer; and in the attack on Heraclius, the phrase about the mad dog appears as part of the author's text, not as a quotation. I have ventured, therefore, to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," and print the phrase as Julian's own.

CAESAR'S APOSTASY

CHARACTERS

THE EMPEROR CONSTANTIUS.
THE EMPRESS EUSEBIA.
THE PRINCESS HELENA, *the Emperor's sister.*
PRINCE GALLUS, *the Emperor's cousin.*
PRINCE JULIAN, *Gallus's younger half-brother.*
MEMNON, *an Ethiopian, the Emperor's body-slave.*
POTAMON, *a goldsmith.*
PHOCION, *a dyer.*
EUNAPIUS, *a hairdresser.*
A Fruit-seller.
A Captain of the Watch.
A Soldier.
A Painted Woman.
A Paralytic Man.
A Blind Beggar.
AGATHON, *son of a Cappadocian vine-grower.*
LIBANIUS, *a Philosopher.*
GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS.
BASIL OF CAESAREA.
SALLUST OF PERUSIA.
HEKEBOLIUS, *a Theologian.*
MAXIMUS THE MYSTIC.
EUTHERIUS, *Julian's chamberlain.*
LEONTES, *a Quaestor.*
MYRRHA, *a slave.*
DECENTIUS, *a Tribune.*
SINTULA, *Julian's Master of the Horse.*
FLORENTIUS, SEVERUS, } *Generals.*
ORIBASES, *a Physician.*
LAIPSO, VARRO, } *Subalterns.*
MAURUS, *a Standard-bearer.*
Soldiers, church-goers, heathen onlookers, courtiers, priests, students, dancing girls, servants, the Quaestor's retinue, Gallic warriors.
Visions and voices.

The first act passes in Constantinople, the second in Athens, the third in Ephesus, the fourth in Lutetia in Gaul, and the fifth in Vienna [Vienne] in the same province. The action takes place during the ten years between A.D. 351 *and* A.D. 361.

CAESAR'S APOSTASY

PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

ACT FIRST

Easter night in Constantinople. The scene is an open place, with trees, bushes, and overthrown statues, in the vicinity of the Imperial Palace. In the background, fully illuminated, stands the Imperial Chapel. To the right a marble balustrade, from which a staircase leads down to the water. Between the pines and cypresses appear glimpses of the Bosphorus and the Asiatic coast.

Service in the church. Soldiers of the Imperial Guard stand on the church steps. Great crowds of worshippers stream in. Beggars, cripples, and blind men at the doors. Heathen onlookers, fruit-sellers, and water-carriers fill up the place.

HYMN OF PRAISE.

[*Inside the church.*]

Never-ending adoration
To the Cross of our salvation!
The Serpent is hurled
To the deepest abyss;
The Lamb rules the world;
All is peace, all is bliss.

POTAMON THE GOLDSMITH.

[*Carrying a paper lantern, enters from the left, taps one of the soldiers on the shoulder, and asks:*] Hist, good friend—when comes the Emperor?

THE SOLDIER.

I cannot tell.

PHOCION THE DYER.

[*In the crowd, turning his head.*] The Emperor? Did not some one ask about the Emperor? The Emperor will come a little before midnight—just before. I had it from Memnon himself.

EUNAPIUS THE BARBER.

[*Rushes in hastily and pushes a Fruit-seller aside.*] Out of the way, heathen!

THE FRUIT-SELLER.

Softly, sir!

POTAMON.

The swine grumbles!

EUNAPIUS.

Dog, dog!

PHOCION.

Grumbling at a well-dressed Christian—at a man of the Emperor's own faith!

EUNAPIUS.

[*Knocks the Fruit-seller down.*] Into the gutter with you!

POTAMON.

That's right. Wallow there, along with your gods!

PHOCION.

[*Beating him with his stick.*] Take t h a t—and t h a t—and t h a t!

EUNAPIUS.

[*Kicking him.*] And t h i s—and t h i s! I'll baste your god-detested skin for you!

[*The Fruit-seller hastens away.*

PHOCION.

[*With the evident intention of being heard by the Captain of the Guard.*] It is much to be desired that some one should bring this scene to our blessed Emperor's ears. The Emperor has lately expressed his displeasure at the way in which we Christian citizens consort with the heathen, just as if no gulf divided us——

POTAMON.

You refer to that placard in the market-places? I too have read it. And I hold that, as there is both true and false gold in the world——

EUNAPIUS.

——we ought not to clip every one with the same shears; that is my way of thinking. There are still zealous souls among us, praise be to God!

PHOCION.

We are far from being zealous enough, dear brethren! See how boldly these scoffers hold up their heads. How

many of this rabble, think you, bear the sign of the cross or of the fish on their arms?

PHOCION.

Not many—and yet they actually swarm in front of the Imperial Chapel——

PHOCION.

——on such a thrice-sacred night as this——

EUNAPIUS.

——blocking the way for true sons of the Church——

A PAINTED WOMAN.

[*In the crowd.*] Are Donatists true sons of the Church?

PHOCION.

What? A Donatist? Are you a Donatist?

EUNAPIUS.

What then? Are not you one?

PHOCION.

I? I? May the lightning blast your tongue!

POTAMON.

[*Making the sign of the cross.*] May plague and boils——!

PHOCION.

A Donatist! You carrion! You rotten tree!

POTAMON.

Right, right!

PHOCION.

You brand for Satan's furnace!

POTAMON.

Right! Give it him; give it him, dear brother!

PHOCION.

[*Pushing the Goldsmith away.*] Hold your tongue; get you behind me. I know you now;—you are Potamon the Manichæan!

EUNAPIUS.

A Manichæan? A stinking heretic! Faugh, faugh!

POTAMON.

[*Holding up his paper lantern.*] Heyday! Why, you are Phocion the Dyer, of Antioch! The Cainite!

EUNAPIUS.

Woe is me, I have held communion with falsehood!

PHOCION.

Woe is me, I have helped a son of Satan!

EUNAPIUS.

[*Boxing his ear.*] Take that for your help!

PHOCION.

[*Returning the blow.*] Oh, you abandoned hound!

POTAMON.

Accursed, accursed be ye both!

[*A general fight; laughter and derision among the onlookers.*

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

[*Calls to the soldiers.*] The Emperor comes!

[*The combatants are parted and carried with the stream of other worshippers into the church.*

HYMN OF PRAISE.

[*From the high altar.*]

The Serpent is hurled
To the deepest abyss;—
The Lamb rules the world,—
All is peace, all is bliss!

The Court enters in stately procession from the left. Priests with censers go before; after them men-at-arms and torch-bearers, courtiers and bodyguards. In their midst the EMPEROR CONSTANTIUS, *a man of thirty-four, of distinguished appearance, beardless, with brown curly hair; his eyes have a dark, distrustful expression; his gait and whole deportment betray uneasiness and debility. Beside him, on his left, walks the* EMPRESS EUSEBIA, *a pale, delicate woman, the same age as the Emperor. Behind the imperial pair follows* PRINCE JULIAN, *a not yet fully developed youth of nineteen. He has black hair and the beginnings of a beard, sparkling brown eyes with a rapid glance; his court-dress sits badly upon him; his manners are notably awkward and abrupt. The Emperor's sister, the* PRINCESS HELENA, *a voluptu-*

ous beauty of twenty-five, follows, accompanied by maidens and older women. Courtiers and men-at-arms close the procession. The Emperor's body-slave, MEMNON, *a heavily-built, magnificently-dressed Ethiopian, is among them.*

THE EMPEROR.

[*Stops suddenly, turns round to* PRINCE JULIAN, *and asks sharply.*] Where is Gallus?

JULIAN.

[*Turning pale.*] Gallus? What would you with Gallus?

THE EMPEROR.

There, I caught you!

JULIAN.

Sire——!

THE EMPRESS.

[*Seizing the* EMPEROR'S *hand.*] Come; come!

THE EMPEROR.

Conscience cried aloud. What are you two plotting?

JULIAN.

We?

THE EMPEROR.

You and he!

THE EMPRESS.

Oh, come; come, Constantius!

THE EMPEROR.

So black a deed! What did the oracle answer?

JULIAN.

The oracle! By my Holy Redeemer——

THE EMPEROR.

If any one maligns you, he shall pay for it at the stake. [*Draws the* PRINCE *aside.*] Oh, let us hold together, Julian! Dear kinsman, let us hold together!

JULIAN.

Everything lies in your hands, my beloved lord.

THE EMPEROR.

My hands——!

JULIAN.

Oh, stretch them in mercy over us!

THE EMPEROR.

My hands? What was in your mind as to my hands?

JULIAN.

[*Grasps his hands and kisses them.*] The Emperor's hands are white and cool.

THE EMPEROR.

What else should they be? What was in your mind? There I caught you again!

JULIAN.

[*Kisses them again.*] They are like rose-leaves in this moonlight night.

THE EMPEROR.

Well, well, well, Julian!

THE EMPRESS.

Forward; it is time.

THE EMPEROR.

To go in before the presence of the Lord! I—I! Oh, pray for me, Julian! They will offer me the consecrated wine. I see it! It glitters in the golden chalice like serpents' eyes—— [*Shrieks.*] Bloody eyes——! Oh, Jesus Christ, pray for me!

THE EMPRESS.

The Emperor is ill——!

THE PRINCESS HELENA.

Where is Caesarius? The physician, the physician—summon him!

THE EMPRESS.

[*Beckons.*] Memnon, good Memnon!

[*She speaks in a low voice to the slave.*

JULIAN.

[*Softly.*] Sire, have pity, and send me far from here.

THE EMPEROR.

Where would you go?

JULIAN.

To Egypt. I would fain go to Egypt, if you think fit. So many go thither—into the great solitude.

THE EMPEROR.

Into the great solitude? Ha! In solitude one broods. I forbid you to brood.

JULIAN.

I will not brood, if only you will let me—— Here my anguish of soul increases day by day. Evil thoughts flock around me. For nine days I have worn a hair shirt, and it has not protected me; for nine nights I have lashed myself with thongs, but scourging does not banish them.

THE EMPEROR.

We must be steadfast, Julian! Satan is very busy in all of us. Speak with Hekebolius——

THE SLAVE MEMNON.

[*To the* EMPEROR.] It is time now——

THE EMPEROR.

No, no, I will not——

MEMNON.

[*Seizing him by the wrist.*] Come, gracious lord;—come, I say.

THE EMPEROR.

[*Draws himself up, and says with dignity.*] Forward to the house of the Lord!

MEMNON.

[*Softly.*] The other matter afterwards——

THE EMPEROR.

[*To* JULIAN.] I must see Gallus.

[JULIAN *folds his hands in supplication to the* EMPRESS *behind the* EMPEROR'S *back.*

THE EMPRESS.

[*Hastily and softly.*] Fear nothing!

THE EMPEROR.

Remain without. Come not into the church with those thoughts in your mind. When you pray before the altar, it is to call down evil upon me.—Oh, lay not that sin upon your soul, my beloved kinsman!

[*The procession moves forward towards the church. On the steps, beggars, cripples, and blind men crowd round the* EMPEROR.

A PARALYTIC.

Oh, mightiest ruler on earth, let me touch the hem of thy garment, that I may become whole.

A BLIND MAN.

Pray for me, anointed of the Lord, that my sight may be restored!

THE EMPEROR.

Be of good cheer, my son!—Memnon, scatter silver among them. In, in!

[*The Court moves forward into the church, the doors of which are closed; the crowd gradually disperses,* PRINCE JULIAN *remaining behind in one of the avenues.*

JULIAN.

[*Looking towards the church.*] What would he with Gallus? On this sacred night he cannot think to——! Oh, if I did but know—— [*He turns and jostles against the blind man, who is departing.*] Look where you go, friend!

THE BLIND MAN.

I am blind, my lord!

JULIAN.

Still blind! Can you not yet see so much as yonder glittering star? Fie! man of little faith! Did not God's anointed promise to pray for your sight?

THE BLIND MAN.

Who are you, that mock at a blind brother!

JULIAN.

A brother in unbelief and blindness.

[*He is about to go off to the left.*

A VOICE.

[*Softly, among the bushes behind him.*] Julian, Julian!

JULIAN.

[*With a cry.*] Ah!

THE VOICE.

[*Nearer.*] Julian!

JULIAN.

Stand, stand;—I am armed. Beware!

A YOUNG MAN.

[*Poorly clad, and with a traveller's staff, appears among the trees.*] Hush! It is I——

JULIAN.

Stand where you are! Do not come near me, fellow!

THE YOUNG MAN.

Oh, do you not remember Agathon——?

JULIAN.

Agathon! What say you? Agathon was a boy——

AGATHON.

Six years ago.—I knew you at once.

[*Coming nearer*

JULIAN.

Agathon;—by the holy cross, but I believe it is!

AGATHON.

Look at me; look well——

JULIAN.

[*Embracing and kissing him.*] Friend of my childhood! Playmate! Dearest of them all! And you are here? How wonderful! You have come all the long way over the mountains, and then across the sea,—the whole long way from Cappadocia?

AGATHON.

I came two days ago, by ship, from Ephesus. Oh, how I have sought in vain for you these two days. At the palace gates the guards would not let me pass, and——

JULIAN.

Did you speak my name to any one? or say that you were in search of me?

AGATHON.

No, I dared not, because——

JULIAN.

There you did right; never let any one know more than you needs must ——

Come hither, Agathon; out into the full moonlight, that I may see you.—How you have grown, Agathon;—how strong you look.

AGATHON.

And you are paler.

JULIAN.

I cannot thrive in the air of the palace. I think it is unwholesome here. 'Tis far otherwise at Makellon.

Makellon lies high. No other town in Cappadocia lies so high; ah, how the fresh snow-winds from the Taurus sweep over it——! Are you weary, Agathon?

AGATHON.

Oh, in no wise.

JULIAN.

Let us sit down nevertheless. It is so quiet and lonely here. Close together; so! [*Draws him down upon a seat beside the balustrade.*]—"Can any good thing come out of Cappadocia," they say. Yes—friends can come. Can anything be better? [*Looks long at him.*

How was it possible that I did not know you at once? Oh, my beloved treasure, is it not just as when we were boys——?

AGATHON.

[*Sinking down before him.*] I at your feet, as of old.

JULIAN.

No, no, no——!

AGATHON.

Oh, let me kneel thus!

JULIAN.

Oh, Agathon, it is a sin and a mockery to kneel to me. If you but knew how sinful I have become. Hekebolius, my beloved teacher, is sorely concerned about me, Agathon. He could tell you——

How thick and moist your hair has grown; and how it curls.—But Mardonius—how goes it with him? His hair must be almost white now?

AGATHON.

It is snow-white.

JULIAN.

How well Mardonius could interpret Homer! I am sure my old Mardonius has not his like at that.—Heroes embattled against heroes—and the gods above fanning the flames. I saw it all, as with my eyes.

AGATHON.

Then your mind was set on being a great and victorious warrior.

JULIAN.

They were happy times, those six years in Cappadocia. Were the years longer then than now? It seems so, when I think of all they contained——

Yes, they were happy years. We at our books, and Gallus on his Persian horse. He swept over the plain like the shadow of a cloud.—Oh, but one thing you must tell me. The church——?

AGATHON.

The church? Over the Holy Mamas's grave?

JULIAN.

[*Smiling faintly.*] Which Gallus and I built. Gallus finished his aisle; but I——; mine never fully prospered. —How has it gone on since?

AGATHON.

Not at all. The builders said it was impossible as you had planned it.

JULIAN.

[*Thoughtfully.*] No doubt, no doubt. I wronged them in thinking them incapable. Now I know why it was not to be. I must tell you, Agathon:—Mamas was a false saint.

AGATHON.

The Holy Mamas?

JULIAN.

That Mamas was never a martyr. His whole legend was a strange delusion. Hekebolius has, with infinite research, arrived at the real truth, and I myself have lately composed a slight treatise on the subject—a treatise, my Agathon, which certain philosophers are said, strangely enough, to have mentioned with praise in the lecture-rooms——

The Lord keep my heart free from vanity! The evil tempter has countless wiles; one can never know——

That Gallus should succeed and I fail! Ah, my Agathon, when I think of that church-building, I see Cain's altar——

AGATHON.

Julian!

JULIAN.

God will have none of me, Agathon!

AGATHON.

Ah, do not speak so! Was not God strong in you when you led me out of the darkness of heathendom, and gave me light over all my days—child though you then were!

JULIAN.

All that is like a dream to me.

AGATHON.

And yet so blessed a truth.

JULIAN.

[*Sadly.*] If only it were so n o w !—Where did I find the words of fire? The air seemed full of hymns of praise—a ladder from earth to heaven— [*Gazes straight before him.*] Did you see it?

AGATHON.

What?

JULIAN.

The star that fell; t h e r e, behind the two cypresses. [*Is silent a moment, then suddenly changes his tone.*] Have I told you what my mother dreamed the night before I was born?

AGATHON.

I do not recall it.

JULIAN.

No, no, I remember—I heard of it after we parted.

AGATHON.

What did she dream?

JULIAN.

My mother dreamed that she gave birth to Achilles,

AGATHON.

[*Eagerly.*] Is your faith in dreams as strong as ever?

JULIAN.

Why do you ask?

AGATHON.

You shall hear; it concerns what has driven me to cross the sea——

JULIAN.

You have a special errand here? I had quite forgotten to ask you——

AGATHON.

A strange errand; so strange that I am lost in doubt and disquietude. There is so much I should like to know first—about life in the city—about yourself—and the Emperor——

JULIAN.

[*Looks hard at him.*] Tell me the truth, Agathon—with whom have you spoken before meeting me?

AGATHON.

With no one.

JULIAN.

When did you arrive?

AGATHON.

I have told you—two days ago.

JULIAN.

And already you want to know——? What would you know about the Emperor? Has any one set you on to——? [*Embraces him.*] Oh, forgive me, Agathon, my friend!

AGATHON.

What? Why?

JULIAN.

[*Rises and listens.*] Hush!—No, it was nothing—only a bird in the bushes——

I am very happy here. Wherefore should you doubt it? Have I not all my family gathered here? at least—all over whom a gracious Saviour has held his hand.

AGATHON.

And the Emperor is as a father to you?

JULIAN.

The Emperor is beyond measure wise and good.

AGATHON.

[*Who has also risen.*] Julian, is the rumour true that you are one day to be the Emperor's successor?

JULIAN.

[*Hastily.*] Speak not of such dangerous matters. I know not what foolish rumours are abroad.—Why do you question me so much? Not a word will I answer till you have told me what brings you to Constantinople.

AGATHON.

I come at the bidding of the Lord God.

JULIAN.

If you love your Saviour or your salvation, get you home again. [*Leans over the balustrade and listens.*] Speak softly; a boat is coming in——

[*Leads him over towards the other side.*

What would you here? Kiss the splinter of the holy cross?—Get you home again, I say! Know you what Constantinople has become in these last fifteen months? A Babylon of blasphemy.—Have you not heard—do you not know that Libanius is here?

AGATHON.

Ah, Julian, I know not Libanius.

JULIAN.

Secluded Cappadocian! Happy region, where his voice and his teaching have found no echo.

AGATHON.

Ah, he is one of those heathen teachers of falsehood——?

JULIAN.

The most dangerous of them all.

AGATHON.

Surely not more dangerous than Aedesius of Pergamus?

JULIAN.

Aedesius!—who now thinks of Aedesius of Pergamus? Aedesius is in his dotage——

AGATHON.

Is he more dangerous than even that mysterious Maximus?

JULIAN.

Maximus? Do not speak of that mountebank. Who knows anything certain of Maximus?

AGATHON.

He avers that he has slept three years in a cave beyond Jordan.

JULIAN.

Hekebolius holds him an impostor, and doubtless he is not far wrong——

No, no, Agathon—Libanius is the most dangerous. Our sinful earth has writhed, as it were, under this scourge. Portents foretold his coming. A pestilential sickness slew men by thousands in the city. And then, when it was over, in the month of November, fire rained from heaven night by night. Nay, do not doubt it, Agathon! I have myself seen the stars break from their spheres, plunge down towards earth, and burn out on the way.

Since then he has lectured here, the philosopher, the orator. All proclaim him the king of eloquence; and well they may. I tell you he is terrible. Youths and men flock around him; he binds their souls in bonds, so

that they m u s t follow him; denial flows seductively from his lips, like songs of the Trojans and the Greeks——

AGATHON.

[*In terror.*] Oh, you too have sought him, Julian!

JULIAN.

[*Shrinking back.*] I!—God preserve me from such a sin. Should any rumours come to your ears, believe them not. 'Tis not true that I have sought out Libanius by night, in disguise. All contact with him would be a horror to me. Besides, the Emperor has forbidden it, and Hekebolius still more strictly.—All believers who approach that subtle man fall away and turn to scoffers. And not they alone. His words are borne from mouth to mouth, even into the Emperor's palace. His airy mockery, his incontrovertible arguments, his very lampoons seem to blend with my prayers;—they are to me like those monsters in the shape of birds who befouled all the food of a pious wandering hero of yore. I sometimes feel with horror that my gorge rises at the true meat of the Word—— [*With an irrepressible outburst.*] Were the empire mine, I would send you the head of Libanius on a charger!

AGATHON.

But how can the Emperor tolerate this? How can our pious, Christian Emperor——?

JULIAN.

The Emperor? Praised be the Emperor's faith and piety! But the Emperor has no thoughts for anything

but this luckless Persian war. All minds are full of it. No one heeds the war that is being waged here, against the Prince of Golgotha. Ah, my Agathon, it is not now as it was two years ago. Then the two brothers of the Mystic Maximus had to pay for their heresies with their lives. You do not know what mighty allies Libanius has. One or other of the lesser philosophers is now and then driven from the city; on h i m no one dares lay a finger. I have begged, I have implored both Hekebolius and the Empress to procure his banishment. But no, no!—What avails it to drive away the others? This one man poisons the air for all of us. Oh, thou my Saviour, if I could but flee from all this abomination of heathendom! To live here is to live in the lion's den——

AGATHON.

[*Eagerly.*] Julian—what was that you said?

JULIAN.

Yes, yes; only a miracle can save us!

AGATHON.

Oh, then listen! That miracle has happened.

JULIAN.

What mean you?

AGATHON.

You shall hear, Julian; for now I can no longer doub that it is you it concerns. What sent me to Constantinople was a vision——

JULIAN.

A vision, you say!

AGATHON.

A heavenly revelation——

JULIAN.

Oh, for God's pity's sake, speak!—Hush, do not speak. Wait—some one is coming. Stand here, quite carelessly;—look unconcerned.

Both remain standing beside the balustrade. A tall, handsome, middle-aged man, dressed, according to the fashion of the philosophers, in a short cloak, enters by the avenue on the left. A troop of youths accompanies him, all in girt-up garments, with wreaths of ivy in their hair, and carrying books, papers, and parchments. Laughter and loud talk among them as they approach.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Let nothing fall into the water, my joyous Gregory! Remember, what you carry is more precious than gold.

JULIAN.

[*Standing close beside him.*] Your pardon,—is aught that a man may carry more precious than gold?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Can you buy back the fruits of your life for gold?

JULIAN.

True; true. But why, then, do you entrust them to the treacherous waters?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

The favour of man is more treacherous still.

JULIAN.

That word was wisdom. And whither do you sail with your treasures?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

To Athens. [*He is about to pass on.*

JULIAN.

[*With suppressed laughter.*] To Athens! Then, oh man of wealth, you do not own your own riches.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

[*Stops.*] How so?

JULIAN.

Is it the part of a wise man to take owls to Athens?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

My owls cannot endure the church-lights here in the imperial city. [*To one of the young men.*] Give me your hand, Sallust. [*Is about to descend the steps.*

SALLUST.

[*Half-way down the steps, whispers.*] By the gods, it is h e !

THE PHILOSOPHER.

He——?

SALLUST.

On my life, 'tis he! I know him;—I have seen him with Hekebolius.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Ah!

[*He looks at* JULIAN *with furtive intentness; then goes a step towards him and says:*

You smiled just now. At what did you smile?

JULIAN.

When you complained of the church-lights, I wondered whether it were not rather the imperial light of the lecture-halls that shone too bright in your eyes.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Envy cannot hide under the short cloak.

JULIAN.

What cannot hide shows forth.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

You have a sharp tongue, noble Galilean.

JULIAN.

Why Galilean? What proclaims me a Galilean?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Your court apparel.

JULIAN.

There is a philosopher beneath it; for I wear a very coarse shirt.—But tell me, what do you seek in Athens?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

What did Pontius Pilate seek?

JULIAN.

Nay, nay! Is not truth here, where Libanius is?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

[*Looking hard at him.*] H'm!—Libanius? Libanius will soon be silent. Libanius is weary of the strife, my lord!

JULIAN.

Weary? He—the invulnerable, the ever-victorious—?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

He is weary of waiting for his peer.

JULIAN.

Now you jest, stranger! Where can Libanius hope to find his peer?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

His peer exists.

JULIAN.

Who? Where? Name him?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

It might be dangerous.

JULIAN.

Why?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Are you not a courtier?

JULIAN.

And what then?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

[*In a lower voice.*] Would you be foolhardy enough to praise the Emperor's successor?

JULIAN.

[*Deeply shaken.*] Ah!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

[*Hastily.*] If you betray me, I shall deny all!

JULIAN.

I betray no man; never fear, never fear!—The Emperor's successor, you say? I cannot tell whom you mean; the Emperor has chosen no successor.—But why this jesting? Why did you speak of Libanius's peer?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Yes or no—is there at the imperial court a youth who, by force and strict commandment, by prayers and persuasions, is held aloof from the light of the lecture-halls?

JULIAN.

[*Hastily.*] That is done to keep his faith pure.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

[*Smiling.*] Has this young man so scant faith in his faith? What can he know about his faith? What does a soldier know of his shield until he has proved it in battle?

JULIAN.

True, true;—but they are loving kinsmen and teachers, I tell you——

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Phrases, my lord! Let me tell you this: it is for the Emperor's sake that his young kinsman is held aloof from the philosophers. The Emperor has not the divine gift of eloquence. Doubtless the Emperor is great; but he cannot endure that his successor should shine forth over the empire——

JULIAN.

[*In confusion.*] And you dare to——!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Ay, ay, you are wroth on your master's account; but——

JULIAN.

Far from it; on the contrary—that is to say——
Listen; my place is somewhat near that young prince. I would gladly learn—— [*Turns.*

Go apart, Agathon; I must speak alone with this man.

[*Withdraws a few steps along with the stranger.*

You said "shine forth"? "Shine forth over the empire?" What do you know, what can any of you know, of Prince Julian?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Can Sirius be hidden by a cloud? Will not the restless wind tear a rift in it here or there, so that——

JULIAN.

Speak plainly, I beg you.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

The palace and the church are as a double cage wherein the prince is mewed up. But the cage is not close enough. Now and then he lets fall an enigmatic word; the court vermin—forgive me, sir—the courtiers spread it abroad in scorn; its deep meaning does not exist for these gentlefolk—your pardon, sir—for most of them it does not exist.

JULIAN.

For none. You may safely say for none.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Yet surely for you; and at any rate for us.——

Yes, he could indeed shine forth over the empire! Are there not legends of his childhood in Cappadocia, when, in disputation with his brother Gallus, he took the part of the gods, and defended them against the Galilean?

JULIAN.

That was in jest, mere practice in rhetoric——

THE PHILOSOPHER.

What has not Mardonius recorded of him? And afterwards Hekebolius! What art was there not even in his boyish utterances—what beauty, what grace in the light play of his thoughts!

JULIAN.

You think so?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Yes, in him we might indeed find an adversary to fear and yet to long for. What should hinder him from reaching so honourable an eminence? He lacks nothing but to pass through the same school through which Paul passed, and passed so unscathed that, when he afterwards joined the Galileans, he shed more light than all the other apostles together, because he possessed knowledge and eloquence! Hekebolius fears for his pupil's faith. Oh, I know it well; the fear is his. Does he forget then, in his exceeding tenderness of conscience, that he himself, in his youth, has drunk of those very springs from which he would now have his pupil debarred? Or think you it was not from us that he learned to use the weapons of speech which he now wields against us with such renowned dexterity?

JULIAN.

True, true; undeniably true!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

And what gifts has this Hekebolius in comparison with the gifts which declared themselves so marvellously in that princely boy, who, it is said, in Cappadocia, upon the graves of the slain Galileans, proclaimed a doctrine which I hold to be erroneous, and by so much the more difficult to instil, but which he nevertheless proclaimed with such fervour of spirit that—if I may believe a very widespread rumour—a multitude of children of his own age were carried away by him, and followed him as his disciples! Ah, Hekebolius is like the rest of you—more jealous than zealous; that is why Libanius has waited in vain.

JULIAN.

[*Seizes him by the arm.*] What has Libanius said? Tell me, I conjure you, in the name of God?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

He has said all that you have just heard. And he has said still more. He has said: "Behold yon princely Galilean; he is an Achilles of the spirit."

JULIAN.

Achilles! [*Softly.*] My mother's dream!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

There, in the open lecture-halls, lies the field of battle. Light and gladness encompass the fighters and the fray. Javelins of speech hurtle through the air; keen swords of wit clash in the combat; the blessed gods sit smiling in the clouds——

JULIAN.

Oh, away from me with your heathendom——

THE PHILOSOPHER.

——and the heroes go home to their tents, their arms entwined, their hearts untouched by rancour, their cheeks aglow, the blood coursing swiftly through every vein, admired, applauded, and with laurels on their brows. Ah, where is Achilles? I cannot see him. Achilles is wroth——

JULIAN.

Achilles is unhappy!—But can I believe it! Oh, tell me—my brain is dizzy—has Libanius said all this?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

What brought Libanius to Constantinople? Had he any other end than to achieve the illustrious friendship of a certain youth?

JULIAN.

Speak the truth! No, no; this cannot be true. How reconcile it with the scoffs and jibes that——? Who scoffs at one whose friendship he would seek?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Wiles of the Galileans to build up a wall of wrath and hate between the two champions.

JULIAN.

Yet you will not deny that it was Libanius——?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

I will deny everything to the uttermost.

JULIAN.

The lampoons were not his?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Not one of them. They have all been hatched in the palace, and spread abroad under his name——

JULIAN.

Ah, what do you tell me——?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

What I will avouch before all the world. You have a sharp tongue—who knows but that you yourself——

JULIAN.

I——! But can I believe this? Libanius did not write them? Not one of them?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

No, no!

JULIAN.

Not even those infamous lines about Atlas with the crooked shoulders?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

No, no, I tell you.

JULIAN.

Nor that foolish and ribald verse about the ape in court dress?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Ha, ha; that came from the church, not from the lecture-hall. You disbelieve it? I tell you it was Hekebolius——

JULIAN.

Hekebolius!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Yes, Hekebolius, Hekebolius himself, to breed hatred between his enemy and his pupil——

JULIAN.

[*Clenching his fists.*] Ah, if it were so!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

If that blinded and deceived young man had known us philosophers, he would not have dealt so hardly with us.

JULIAN.

Of what are you speaking?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

It is too late now. Farewell, my lord! [*Going.*

JULIAN.

[*Seizes his hand.*] Friend and brother, who are you?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

One who sorrows to see the God-born go to ruin.

JULIAN.

What do you call the God-born?

THE PHILOSOPHER.

The Uncreated in the Ever-changing.

JULIAN.

Still I am in the dark.

THE PHILOSOPHER.

There is a whole glorious world to which you Galileans are blind. In it our life is one long festival, amid statues and choral songs, foaming goblets in our hands, and our locks entwined with roses. Airy bridges span the gulfs between spirit and spirit, stretching away to the farthest orbs in space——

I know one who might be king of all that vast and sunlit realm.

JULIAN.

[*In dread.*] Ay, at the cost of his salvation!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

What is salvation? Reunion with the primal deeps.

JULIAN.

Yes, in conscious life. Reunion for me, as the being I am!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Reunion like that of the raindrop with the sea, like that of the crumbling leaf with the earth that bore it.

JULIAN.

Oh, had I but learning! Had I but the weapons to use against you!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Take to yourself weapons, young man! The lecture-hall is the armoury of intellect and talent——

JULIAN.

[*Recoiling.*] Ah!

THE PHILOSOPHER.

Look at those joyous youths yonder. There are Galileans among them. Errors in things divine cause no discord among us.

Farewell! You Galileans have sent truth into exile. See, now, how we bear the buffets of fate. See, we hold high our wreath-crowned heads. So we depart—shortening the night with song, and awaiting Helios.

[*He descends the steps where his disciples have waited for him; then the boat is heard rowing away with them.*

JULIAN.

[*Gazes long over the water.*] Who was he, that mysterious man?

AGATHON.

[*Approaching.*] Listen to me, Julian——?

JULIAN.

[*In lively excitement.*] He understood me! And Libanius himself, the great, incomparable Libanius——! Only think, Agathon, Libanius has said—— Oh, how keen must the heathen eye not be!

AGATHON.

Trust me, this meeting was a work of the Tempter!

JULIAN.

[*Not heeding him.*] I can no longer endure to live among these people. It was they, then, who wrote those abominable lampoons! They make a mockery of me here; they laugh behind my back; not one of them believes in the power that dwells in me. They ape my gait; they distort my manners and my speech; Hekebolius himself——! Oh, I feel it—Christ is deserting me; I grow evil here.

AGATHON.

Oh, though you know it not—you, even you, stand under special grace.

JULIAN.

[*Walks up and down beside the balustrade.*] *I* am he with whom Libanius longs to measure swords. How strange a wish! Libanius accounts me his peer. It is me he awaits——

AGATHON.

Hear and obey: Christ awaits you!

JULIAN.

What mean you, friend?

AGATHON.

The vision that sent me to Constantinople——

JULIAN.

Yes, yes, the vision; I had almost forgotten it. A revelation, you said? Oh, speak, speak!

AGATHON.

It was at home in Cappadocia, a month ago or a little more. There went a rumour abroad that the heathens had again begun to hold secret meetings by night in the temple of Cybele——

JULIAN.

How foolhardy! Are they not strictly forbidden——

AGATHON.

Therefore all we believers arose in wrath. The magistrates ordered the temple to be pulled down, and we broke in pieces the abominable idols. The more zealous among us were impelled by the Spirit of the Lord to go still further. With singing of psalms, and with sacred banners at our head, we marched through the town and fell upon the godless like messengers of wrath; we took from them their treasures; many houses were set on fire, and heathens not a few perished in the flames; still more we slew in the streets as they fled. Oh, it was a marvellous time for the glory of God!

JULIAN.

And then? The vision, my Agathon!

AGATHON.

For three whole nights and days the Lord of Vengeance was strong in us. But at last the weak flesh could no longer keep pace with the willing spirit, and we desisted from the pursuit——

I lay upon my bed; I could neither wake nor sleep. I felt, as it were, an inward hollowness, as though the spirit had departed out of me. I lay in burning heat; I tore my hair, I wept, I prayed, I sang;—I cannot tell what came over me——

Then, on a sudden, I saw before me by the wall a white and shining light, and in the radiance stood a man in a long cloak. A glory encircled his head; he held a reed in his hand, and fixed his gaze mildly upon me.

JULIAN.

You saw that!

AGATHON.

I saw it. And then he spoke and said: "Agathon; arise, seek him out who shall inherit the empire; bid him enter the lions' den and do battle with the lions."

JULIAN.

Do battle with the lions! Oh, strange, strange!—Ah, if it were——! The meeting with that philosopher—A revelation; a message to me—; am *I* the chosen one?

AGATHON.

Assuredly you are!

JULIAN.

Do battle with the lions!—Yes, I see it;—so it must be, my Agathon! It is God's will that I should seek out Libanius——

AGATHON.

No, no; hear me out!

JULIAN.

——worm from him all his arts and his learning—smite the unbelievers with their own weapons—fight, fight like Paul—conquer like Paul, in the cause of the Lord!

AGATHON.

No, no! that was not the intent!

JULIAN.

Can you doubt it? Libanius—is he not strong as the mountain lion, and is not the lecture-hall——?

AGATHON.

I tell you it is not so; for the vision added: "Proclaim to the chosen one that he shall shake the dust of the imperial city from his feet, and never more enter its gates."

JULIAN.

Are you sure of that, Agathon?

AGATHON.

Absolutely sure.

JULIAN.

Not here, then! Do battle with the lions? Where, where? Oh, where shall I find light?

PRINCE GALLUS, *a handsome, strongly-built man of five-and-twenty, with light curly hair, and fully armed, enters by the avenue on the left.*

JULIAN.

[*Rushing up to him.*] Gallus!

GALLUS.

What now? [*Points to* AGATHON.] Who is that man?

JULIAN.

Agathon.

GALLUS.

What Agathon? You have so many strange companions—— Ah, by heaven, it is the Cappadocian! You have grown quite a man——

JULIAN.

Do you know, Gallus—the Emperor has asked for you.

GALLUS.

[*Anxiously.*] Just now? To-night?

JULIAN.

Yes, yes; he wanted to speak with you. He seemed greatly angered.

GALLUS.

How know you that? What did he say?

JULIAN.

I did not understand it. He asked what some oracle had answered.

GALLUS.

Ah!

JULIAN.

Hide nothing from me. What is the matter?

GALLUS.

Death or banishment is the matter.

AGATHON.

Gracious Saviour!

JULIAN.

I feared as much! But no, the Empress spoke hopefully. Oh, say on, say on!

GALLUS.

What shall I say? How should I know more than you? If the Emperor spoke of an oracle, a certain messenger must have been intercepted, or some one must have betrayed me——

JULIAN.

A messenger?—Gallus, what have you dared to do?

GALLUS.

How could I live any longer this life of doubt and dread? Let him do with me as he pleases; anything is better than this——

JULIAN.

[*Softly, leading him some paces aside.*] Have a care, Gallus! What is this about a messenger?

GALLUS.

I have addressed a question to the priests of Osiris in Abydus——

JULIAN.

Ah, the oracle! The heathen oracle——!

GALLUS.

The heathenism might be forgiven me; but—well, why should you not know it?—I have inquired as to the issue of the Persian war——

JULIAN.

What madness!—Gallus—I see it in your face: you have asked other questions!

GALLUS.

No more; I have not asked——

JULIAN.

Yes, yes; you have inquired as to a mighty man's life or death!

GALLUS.

And if I had? What can be of more moment to both of us?

JULIAN.

[*Throwing his arms round him.*] Be silent, madman!

GALLUS.

Away from me! You may cringe before him like a cur; but I have no mind to endure it longer. I will cry it aloud in all the market-places—— [*Calls to* AGATHON.] Have you seen him, Cappadocian? Have you seen the murderer?

JULIAN.

Gallus! Brother!

AGATHON.

The murderer!

GALLUS.

The murderer in the purple robe; my father's murderer, my step-mother's, my eldest brother's——

JULIAN.

Oh, you are calling down destruction upon us!

GALLUS.

Eleven heads in one single night; eleven bodies; our whole house.—Ah, but be sure conscience is torturing him; it shivers through the marrow of his bones like a swarm of serpents.

JULIAN.

Do not listen to him! Away, away!

GALLUS.

[*Seizes* JULIAN *by the shoulder.*] Stay;—you look pale and disordered; is it you that have betrayed me?

JULIAN.

I! Your own brother——!

GALLUS.

What matter for that! Brotherhood protects no one in our family. Confess that you have secretly spied upon my doings! Who else should it be? Think you I do not know what people are whispering? The Emperor designs to make you his successor.

JULIAN.

Never! I swear to you, my beloved Gallus, it shall never be! I will not. One mightier than he has chosen me.—Oh, trust me, Gallus: my path is marked out for me. I will not go thither, I tell you. Oh, God of Hosts —I on the imperial throne! No, no, no!

GALLUS.

Ha-ha; well acted, mummer!

JULIAN.

Ay, you may scoff, since you know not what has happened. Myself, I scarcely know. Oh, Agathon—if this

head were to be anointed! Would it not be an apostasy —a deadly sin? Would not the Lord's holy oil burn me like molten lead?

GALLUS.

Were that so, then were our august kinsman balder than Julius Caesar.

JULIAN.

Beware how you speak! Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's——

GALLUS.

My father's blood—your father's and your mother's—!

JULIAN.

Oh, what know we of those horrors? We were children then. The soldiers were chiefly to blame; it was the rebels—evil counsellors——

GALLUS.

[*Laughing.*] The Emperor's successor rehearses his part!

JULIAN.

[*Weeping.*] Oh, Gallus, would I might die or be banished in your stead! I am wrecking my soul here. I ought to forgive—and I cannot. Evil grows in me; hate and revenge whisper in my ear——

GALLUS.

[*Rapidly, looking towards the church.*] There he comes!

JULIAN.

Be prudent, my beloved brother!—Ah, Hekebolius!

The church door has meanwhile been opened. The congregation streams forth; some pass away, others remain standing to see the Court pass. Among those who come out is HEKEBOLIUS; *he wears priestly dress.*

HEKEBOLIUS.

[*On the point of passing out to the left.*] Is that you, my Julian? Ah, I have again passed a heavy hour for your sake.

JULIAN.

Alas! I fear that happens too often.

HEKEBOLIUS.

Christ is wroth against you, my son! It is your ~~froward~~ forward spirit that angers him; it is your unloving thoughts, and all this worldly vanity——

JULIAN.

I know it, my Hekebolius! You so often tell me so.

HEKEBOLIUS.

Even now I lifted up my soul in prayer for your amendment. Oh, it seemed as though our otherwise so gracious Saviour repulsed my prayer,—as though he would not listen to me; he suffered my thoughts to wander upon trifling things.

JULIAN.

You prayed for me? Oh, loving Hekebolius, you pray even for us dumb animals—at least when we wear court dress!

HEKEBOLIUS.

What mean you, my son?

JULIAN.

Hekebolius, how could you write those shameful verses?

HEKEBOLIUS.

I? I swear by all that is high and holy——

JULIAN.

I see in your eyes that you are lying! I have full assurance that you wrote them. How could you do it, I ask —and under the name of Libanius, too?

HEKEBOLIUS.

Well, well, my dearly beloved, since you know it, I——

JULIAN.

Ah, Hekebolius! Deceit, and lies, and treachery——

HEKEBOLIUS.

Behold, my precious friend, how deep is my love for you! I dare all to save the soul of that man who shall one day be the Lord's anointed. If, in my zeal for you, I have had recourse to deceit and lies, I know that a

gracious God has found my course well pleasing in his sight, and has stretched forth his hand to sanction it.

JULIAN.

How blind have I been! Let me press these perjured fingers——

HEKEBOLIUS.

The Emperor!

[*The* EMPEROR CONSTANTIUS, *with his whole retinue, comes from the church.* AGATHON *has already, during the foregoing, withdrawn among the bushes on the right.*

THE EMPEROR.

Oh, blessed peace of heaven in my heart.

THE EMPRESS.

Do you feel yourself strengthened, my Constantius?

THE EMPEROR.

Yes, yes! I saw the living Dove hovering over me. It took away the burden of all my sin.—Now I dare venture much, Memnon!

MEMNON.

[*Softly.*] Lose not a moment, sire!

THE EMPEROR.

There they both stand.

[*He goes towards the brothers.*

GALLUS.

[*Mechanically feels for his sword, and cries in terror.*] Do me no ill!

THE EMPEROR.

[*With outstretched arms.*] Gallus! Kinsman!

[*He embraces and kisses him.*]

Lo, in the light of the Easter stars, I choose the man who lies nearest my heart.—Bow all to the earth. Hail Gallus Caesar![1]

[*General astonishment among the Court; a few involuntary shouts are raised.*

THE EMPRESS.

[*With a shriek.*] Constantius!

GALLUS.

[*Amazed.*] Caesar!

JULIAN.

Ah!

[*He tries to seize the* EMPEROR'S *hands, as if in joy.*

THE EMPEROR.

[*Waving him aside.*] Away from me! What would you? Is not Gallus the elder? What hopes have you been cherishing? What rumours have you, in your blind presumption——? Away; away!

GALLUS.

I—I Caesar!

[1] The name Caesar was at this period used as the title of the heir to the throne, the Emperor himself being entitled "Augustus."

THE EMPEROR.

My heir and my successor. In three days you will set out for the army in Asia. I know the Persian war is much on your mind——

GALLUS.

Oh, my most gracious sire——!

THE EMPEROR.

Thank me in deeds, my beloved Gallus! King Sapor lies west of the Euphrates. I know how solicitous you are for my life; be it your task, then, to crush him.

[*He turns, takes* JULIAN'S *head between his hands, and kisses him.*

And you, Julian, my pious friend and brother—so it needs must be.

JULIAN.

All blessings on the Emperor's will!

THE EMPEROR.

Call down no blessings! Yet listen—I have thought of you too. Know, Julian, that now you can breathe freely in Constantinople——

JULIAN.

Yes, praise be to Christ and the Emperor!

THE EMPEROR.

You know it already? Who has told you?

JULIAN.

What, sire?

THE EMPEROR.

That Libanius is banished?

JULIAN.

Libanius—banished!

THE EMPEROR.

I have banished him to Athens.

JULIAN.

Ah!

THE EMPEROR.

Yonder lies his ship; he sails to-night.

JULIAN.

[*Aside.*] He himself; he himself!

THE EMPEROR.

You have long wished it. I have not hitherto been able to fulfil your desire; but now——; let this be a slight requital to you, my Julian——

JULIAN.

[*Quickly seizing his hand.*] Sire, do me one grace more.

THE EMPEROR.

Ask what you will.

JULIAN.

Let me go to Pergamus. You know the old Aedesius teaches there——

THE EMPEROR.

A very strange wish. You, among the heathens——?

JULIAN.

Aedesius is not dangerous; he is a high-minded old man, drawing towards the grave——

THE EMPEROR.

And what would you with him, brother?

JULIAN.

I would learn to do battle with the lions.

THE EMPEROR.

I understand your pious thought. And you are not afraid——; you think yourself strong enough——?

JULIAN.

The Lord God has called me with a loud voice. Like Daniel, I go fearless and joyful into the lions' den.

THE EMPEROR.

Julian!

JULIAN.

To-night, without knowing it, you have yourself been his instrument. Oh, let me go forth to purge the world!

GALLUS.

[*Softly to the* EMPEROR.] Humour him, sire; it will prevent his brooding on higher things.

THE EMPRESS.

I implore you, Constantius—set no bar to this vehement longing.

HEKEBOLIUS.

Great Emperor, let him go to Pergamus. I fear I am losing hold of him here, and now 'tis no longer of such moment.

THE EMPEROR.

How could I deny you anything in such an hour? Go with God, Julian!

JULIAN.

[*Kissing his hands.*] Oh, thanks—thanks!

THE EMPEROR.

And now to a banquet of rejoicing! My Capuan cook has invented some new fast-dishes, carp-necks in Chios wine, and—— Forward;—your place is next to me, Gallus Caesar!

[*The procession begins to advance.*]

GALLUS.

[*Softly.*] Helena, what a marvellous change of fortune!

HELENA.

Oh, Gallus, dawn is breaking over our hopes.

GALLUS.

I can scarce believe it! Who has brought it about?

HELENA.

Hush!

GALLUS.

You, my beloved? Or who—who?

HELENA.

Memnon's Spartan dog.

GALLUS.

What do you mean?

HELENA.

Memnon's dog. Julian kicked it; this is Memnon's revenge.

THE EMPEROR.

Why so silent, Eusebia?

THE EMPRESS.

[*Softly, in tears.*] Oh, Constantius—how could you make such a choice!

THE EMPEROR.

Eleven ghosts demanded it.

THE EMPRESS.

Woe upon us; this will not appease the ghosts.

THE EMPEROR.

[*Calls loudly.*] Flute-players! Why are the rascals silent? Play, play!

[*All, except* PRINCE JULIAN, *go out to the left.* AGATHON *comes forward among the trees.*

JULIAN.

Gallus his successor; and I—free, free, free!

AGATHON.

Marvellously are the counsels of the Lord revealed.

JULIAN.

Heard you what passed?

AGATHON.

Yes, everything.

JULIAN.

And to-morrow, my Agathon, to-morrow to Athens!

AGATHON.

To Athens? 'Tis to Pergamus you go.

JULIAN.

Hush! You do not know——; we must be cunning as serpents. First to Pergamus—and then to Athens!

AGATHON.

Farewell, my lord and friend!

JULIAN.

Will you go with me, Agathon?

AGATHON.

I cannot. I must go home; I have my little brother to care for.

JULIAN.

[*At the balustrade.*] There they are weighing anchor. —A fair wind to you, winged lion; Achilles follows in your wake. [*Exclaims softly.*
Ah!

AGATHON.

What was that?

JULIAN.

Yonder fell a star.

ACT SECOND

In Athens. An open place surrounded by colonnades. In the square, statues and a fountain. A narrow street debouches in the left-hand corner. Sunset.

BASIL OF CAESAREA, *a delicately-built young man, sits reading beside a pillar.* GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS *and other scholars of the University stroll in scattered groups up and down the colonnades. A larger band runs shouting across the square, and out to the right; noise in the distance.*

BASIL.

[*Looks up from his book.*] What mean these wild cries?

GREGORY.

A ship has come in from Ephesus.

BASIL.

With new scholars?

GREGORY.

Yes.

BASIL.

[*Rising.*] Then we shall have a night of tumult. Come, Gregory; let us not witness all this unseemliness.

GREGORY.

[*Points to the left.*] Look yonder. Is t h a t a pleasanter sight?

BASIL.

Prince Julian——; with roses in his hair, his face aflame——

GREGORY.

Ay, and after him that reeling, glassy-eyed crew. Hear how the halting tongues babble with wine! They have sat the whole day in Lykon's tavern.

BASIL.

And many of them are our own brethren, Gregory; they are Christian youths——

GREGORY.

So they call themselves. Did not Lampon call himself a Christian—he who betrayed the oil-seller Zeno's daughter? And Hilarion of Agrigentum, and the two others, who did what I shudder to name——

PRINCE JULIAN.

[*Is heard calling without on the left.*] Aha! See, see —the Cappadocian Castor and Pollux.

BASIL.

He has caught sight of us. I will go; I cannot endure to see him in this mood.

GREGORY.

I will remain; he needs a friend.

BASIL *goes out to the right. At the same moment,* PRINCE JULIAN, *followed by a crowd of young men, enters from the narrow street. His hair is dishevelled, and he is clad in a short cloak like the rest. Among the scholars is* SALLUST OF PERUSIA.

MANY IN THE CROWD.

Long live the light of Athens! Long live the lover of wisdom and eloquence!

JULIAN.

All your flattery is wasted. Not another verse shall you have to-day.

SALLUST.

When our leader is silent, life seems empty, as on the morning after a night's carouse.

JULIAN.

If we must needs do something, let it be something new. Let us hold a mock trial.

THE WHOLE CROWD.

Yes, yes, yes; Prince Julian on the judgment-seat!

JULIAN.

Have done with the Prince, friends——

SALLUST.

Ascend the judgment-seat, incomparable one!

JULIAN.

How could I presume——? There stands the man. Who is so learned in the law as Gregory of Nazianzus?

SALLUST.

That is true!

JULIAN.

To the judgment-seat, my wise Gregory; I am the prisoner at the bar.

GREGORY.

I beg you, friend, let me stand out.

JULIAN.

To the judgment-seat, I say! To the judgment-seat. [*To the others.*] What is my transgression?

SOME VOICES.

Yes, what shall it be? Choose yourself!

SALLUST.

Let it be something Galilean, as we of the ungodly say.

JULIAN.

Right; something Galilean. I have it. I have refused to pay tribute to the Emperor——

MANY VOICES.

Ha-ha; well bethought! Excellent!

JULIAN.

Here am I, dragged forward by the nape of the neck, with my hands pinioned——

SALLUST.

[*To* GREGORY.] Blind judge—I mean since Justice is blind—behold this desperate wretch; he has denied to pay tribute to the Emperor.

JULIAN.

Let me throw one word into the scales of judgment. I am a Greek citizen. How much does a Greek citizen owe the Emperor?

GREGORY.

What the Emperor demands.

JULIAN.

Good; but how much—answer now as though the Emperor himself were in court—how much has the Emperor a right to demand?

GREGORY.

Everything.

JULIAN.

Answered as though the Emperor were present indeed! But now comes the knotty point; for it is written: Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's—and unto God the things that are God's.

GREGORY.

And what then?

JULIAN.

Then tell me, oh sagacious judge—how much of what is mine belongs to God?

GREGORY.

Everything.

JULIAN.

And how much of God's property may I give to the Emperor?

GREGORY.

Dear friends, no more of this sport.

THE SCHOLARS.

[*Amid laughter and noise.*] Yes, yes; answer him.

JULIAN.

How much of God's property has the Emperor a right to demand?

GREGORY.

I will not answer. This is unseemly both towards God and the Emperor. Let me go.

MANY VOICES.

Make a ring round him!

JULIAN.

Hold him fast! What, you most luckless of judges, you have bungled the Emperor's cause, and now you seek

to escape? You would flee? Whither, whither? To the Scythians? Bring him before me! Tell me you servants that-are-to-be of the Emperor and of wisdom—has he not attempted to elude the Emperor's power?

THE SCHOLARS.

Yes, yes.

JULIAN.

And what punishment do you award to such a misdeed?

VOICES.

Death! Death in a wine-jar!

JULIAN.

Let us reflect. Let us answer as though the Emperor himself were present. What limit is there to the Emperor's power?

SOME OF THE CROWD.

The Emperor's power has no limits.

JULIAN.

So I should think. But to want to escape from the infinite, my friends, is not that madness?

THE SCHOLARS.

Yes, yes; the Cappadocian is mad!

JULIAN.

And what, then, is madness? How did our forefathers conceive of it? What was the doctrine of the

Egyptian priests? And what says Maximus the Mystic and the other philosophers of the East? They say that the divine enigma reveals itself in the brainsick. Our Gregory—in setting himself up against the Emperor—is thus in special league with Heaven.—Make libations of wine to the Cappadocian; sing songs to our Gregory's praise;—a statue of honour for Gregory of Nazianzus!

THE SCHOLARS.

[*Amid laughter and glee.*] Praise to the Cappadocian! Praise to the Cappadocian's judge!

The PHILOSOPHER LIBANIUS, *surrounded by disciples, comes across the square.*

LIBANIUS.

Ah, see—is not my brother Julian dispensing wisdom in the open market-place?

JULIAN.

Say folly, dear friend; wisdom has departed the city.

LIBANIUS.

Has wisdom departed the city?

JULIAN.

Or is on the point of departing; for are not you also bound for the Piraeus?

LIBANIUS.

I, my brother? What should I want at the Piraeus?

JULIAN.

Our Libanius, then, is the only teacher who does not know that a ship has just arrived from Ephesus.

LIBANIUS.

Why, my friend, what have I to do with that ship?

JULIAN.

It is loaded to the water's edge with embryo philosophers——

LIBANIUS.

[*Scornfully.*] They come from Ephesus!

JULIAN.

Is not gold equally weighty whencesoever it may come?

LIBANIUS.

Gold? Ha-ha! The golden ones Maximus keeps to himself; he does not let them go. What sort of scholars is Ephesus wont to send us? Shop-keepers' sons, the first-born of mechanics. Gold say you, my Julian? I call it lack of gold. But I will turn this lack of gold to account, and out of it I will mint for you young men a coin of true and weighty metal. For may not a precious lesson in life, set forth in ingenious and attractive form, be compared to a piece of full-weighted golden currency?—

Hear then, if you have a mind to. Was it not said that certain men had rushed eagerly down to the Piraeus? Who are they, these eager ones? Far be it from me to

mention names; they call themselves lovers and teachers of wisdom. Let us betake ourselves in thought to the Piraeus. What is passing there at this moment, even as I stand here in this circle of kindly listeners? I will tell you what is passing. Those men, who give themselves out as lovers and dispensers of wisdom, are crowding upon the gangway, jostling, wrangling, biting, forgetting all decorum, and throwing dignity to the winds. And why? To be the first in the field,—to pounce upon the best dressed youths, to lead them home, to entertain them, hoping in the end to make profit out of them in all possible ways. What a shamefaced, empty awakening, as after a debauch, if it should presently appear—ha-ha-ha!—that these youths have scarcely brought with them the wherewithal to pay for their supper of welcome! Learn from this, young men, how ill it becomes a lover of wisdom, and how little it profits him, to run after good things other than the truth.

JULIAN.

Oh, my Libanius, when I listen to you with closed eyes, I seem lapped in the sweet dream that Diogenes has once more arisen in our midst.

LIBANIUS.

Your lips are princely spendthrifts of praise, beloved of my soul.

JULIAN.

Far from it. And yet I had almost interrupted your homily; for in this case, one of your colleagues will scarce find himself disappointed.

LIBANIUS.

My friend is jesting.

JULIAN.

Your friend assures you that the two sons of the governor, Milo, are on board.

LIBANIUS.

[*Grasping his arm.*] What do you say?

JULIAN.

That the new Diogenes who secures t h e m as his pupils will scarce need to drink out of the hollow of his hand for poverty.

LIBANIUS.

The sons of the Governor Milo! That noble Milo, who sent the Emperor seven Persian horses, with saddles embroidered with pearls——?

JULIAN.

Many thought that too mean a gift for Milo.

LIBANIUS.

Very true. Milo ought to have sent a poem, or perhaps a well-polished speech, or a letter. Milo is a nobly-endowed man; all Milo's family are nobly-endowed.

JULIAN.

Especially the two young men.

LIBANIUS.

No doubt, no doubt. For the sake of their beneficent and generous father, I pray the gods that they may fall into good hands. After all, then, you were right, my Julian; the ship brought real gold from Ephesus. For are not intellectual gifts the purest of gold? But I cannot rest; these young men's welfare is, in truth, a weighty matter; so much depends on who first gains control of them. My young friends, if you think as I do, we will hold out a guiding hand to these two strangers, help them to make the wisest choice of teacher and abode, and——

SALLUST.

I will go with you!

THE SCHOLARS.

To the Piraeus! To the Piraeus!

SALLUST.

We will fight like wild boars for Milo's sons!

[*They all go out, with* LIBANIUS, *to the right; only* PRINCE JULIAN *and* GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS *remain behind in the colonnade.*

JULIAN.

[*Following them with his eyes.*] See how they go leaping like a troop of fauns. How they lick their lips at the thought of the feast that awaits them this evening. [*He turns to* GREGORY.] If there is one thing they would sigh to God for at this moment, it is that he would empty their stomachs of their breakfasts.

GREGORY.

Julian——

JULIAN.

Look at me; I am sober.

GREGORY.

I know that. You are temperate in all things. And yet you share this life of theirs.

JULIAN.

Why not? Do you know, or do I, when the thunderbolt will fall? Then why not make the most of the bright and sunlit day? Do you forget that I dragged out my childhood and the first years of my youth in gilded slavery? It had become a habit, I might almost say a necessity to me, to live under a weight of dread. And now? This stillness as of the grave on the Emperor's part;—this sinister silence! I left Pergamus without the Emperor's permission; the Emperor said nothing. I went of my own will to Nicomedia; I lived there, and studied with Nikokles and others; the Emperor gave no sign. I came to Athens, and sought out Libanius, whom the Emperor had forbidden me to see;—the Emperor has said nothing to this day. How am I to interpret this?

GREGORY.

Interpret it in charity, Julian.

JULIAN.

Oh, you do not know——! I hate this power without me, terrible in action, more terrible when at rest.

GREGORY.

Be frank, my friend, and tell me whether it is this alone that has led you into all these strange ways?

JULIAN.

What mean you by strange ways?

GREGORY.

Is the rumour true, that you pass your nights in searching out the heathen mysteries in Eleusis?

JULIAN.

Oh, pooh! I assure you there is little to be learnt from those riddle-mongering dreamers. Let us talk no more about them.

GREGORY.

Then it is true! Oh, Julian, how could you seek such shameful intercourse?

JULIAN.

I must live, Gregory,—and this life at the University is no life at all. This Libanius! I shall never forgive him the great love I once bore him! At my first coming, how humbly and with what tremors of joy did I not enter the presence of this man, bowing myself before him, kissing him, and calling him my great brother.

GREGORY.

Yes, we Christians all thought that you went too far.

JULIAN.

And yet I came here in exaltation of spirit. I saw, in my fancy, a mighty contest between us two,—the world's truth in pitched battle against God's truth.—What has it all come to? Libanius never seriously desired that contest. He never desired any contest whatever; he cares only for his own interest. I tell you, Gregory—Libanius is not a great man.

GREGORY.

Yet all enlightened Greece proclaims him great.

JULIAN.

A great man he is not, I tell you. Once only have I seen Libanius great: that night in Constantinople. Then he was great, because he had suffered a great wrong, and because he was filled with a noble wrath. But here! Oh, what have I not seen here? Libanius has great learning, but he is no great man. Libanius is greedy; he is vain; he is eaten up with envy. See you not how he has writhed under the fame which I—largely, no doubt, owing to the indulgence of my friends—have been so fortunate as to acquire? Go to Libanius, and he will expound to you the inward essence and the outward signs of all the virtues. He has them ready to hand, just as he has the books in his library. But does he exercise these virtues? Is his life at one with his teaching? He a successor of Socrates and of Plato—ha-ha! Did he not flatter the Emperor, up to the time of his banishment? Did he not flatter me at our meeting in Constantinople, that meeting which he has since attempted, most unsuccessfully, to present in a ludicrous light!

And what am I to him now? Now he writes letters to Gallus, to Gallus Caesar, to the Emperor's heir, congratulating him on his successes against the Persians, although these successes have as yet been meagre enough, and Gallus Caesar is not distinguished either for learning or for any considerable eloquence.—And this Libanius the Greeks persist in calling the king of the philosophers! Ah, I will not deny that it stirs my indignation. I should have thought, to tell the truth, that the Greeks might have made a better choice, if they had noted a little more closely the cultivators of wisdom and eloquence, who of late years——

BASIL OF CAESAREA.

[*Entering from the right.*] Letters! Letters from Cappadocia!

GREGORY.

For me too?

BASIL.

Yes, here; from your mother.

GREGORY.

My pious mother! [*He opens the paper and reads.*

JULIAN.

[*To* BASIL.] Is it your sister who writes to you?

BASIL.

[*Who has entered with his own letter open.*] Yes, it is Makrina. Her news is both sad and strange.

JULIAN.

What is it? Tell me.

BASIL.

First of your noble brother Gallus. He rules sternly in Antioch.

JULIAN.

Yes, Gallus is hard.—Does Makrina write "sternly."

BASIL.

[*Looking at him.*] Makrina writes "bloodily"——

JULIAN.

Ah, I thought as much! Why did the Emperor marry him to that dissolute widow, that Constantina?

GREGORY.

[*Reading.*] Oh, what unheard-of infamy!

JULIAN.

What is it, friend?

GREGORY.

[*To* BASIL.] Does Makrina say nothing of what is happening in Antioch?

BASIL.

Nothing definite. What is it? You are pale——

GREGORY.

You knew the noble Clemazius, the Alexandrian?

BASIL.

Yes, yes; what of him?

GREGORY.

He is murdered, Basil!

BASIL.

What do you say? Murdered?

GREGORY.

I call it murdered;—they have executed him without law or judgment.

JULIAN.

Who? Who has executed him?

GREGORY.

Yes, who? How can I say who? My mother tells the story thus: Clemazius's mother-in-law was inflamed with an impure love for her daughter's husband; but as she could not move him to wrong, she gained some back-stairs access to the palace——

JULIAN.

What palace?

GREGORY.

My mother writes only "the palace."

JULIAN.

Well? And then——?

GREGORY.

It is only known that she presented a very costly jewel to a great and powerful lady to procure a death-warrant——

JULIAN.

Ah, but they did not get it!

GREGORY.

They got it, Julian.

JULIAN.

Oh, Jesus!

BASIL.

Horrible! And Clemazius——?

GREGORY.

The death-warrant was sent to the governor, Honoratus. That weak man dared not disobey so high a command. Clemazius was thrown into prison and executed early next morning, without being suffered, my mother writes, to open his lips in his own defence.

JULIAN.

[*Pale, in a low voice.*] Burn these dangerous letters; they might bring us all to ruin.

BASIL.

Such open violence in the midst of a great city! Where are we; where are we?

JULIAN.

Aye, you may well ask where we are! A Christian murderer, a Christian adulteress, a Christian——!

GREGORY.

Denunciations will not mend this matter. What do you intend to do?

JULIAN.

I? I will go no more to Eleusis; I will break off all dealings with the heathen, and thank the Lord my God that he spared me the temptations of power.

GREGORY.

Good; but then?

JULIAN.

I do not understand you——

GREGORY.

Then listen. The murder of Clemazius is not all, believe me. This unheard-of infamy has descended like a plague on Antioch. All evil things have awakened, and are swarming forth from their lairs. My mother writes that it seems as though some pestilent abyss had opened. Wives denounce their husbands, sons their fathers, priests the members of their own flock——

JULIAN.

This will spread yet further. The abomination will corrupt us all.—— Oh, Gregory, would I could fly to the world's end——

GREGORY.

Your place is at the world's navel, Prince Julian.

JULIAN.

What would you have me do?

GREGORY.

You are this bloody Caesar's brother. Stand forth before him—he calls himself a Christian—and cast his crime in his teeth; smite him to the earth in terror and remorse——

JULIAN.

[*Recoiling.*] Madman, of what are you thinking?

GREGORY.

Is your brother dear to you? Would you save him?

JULIAN.

I once loved Gallus above all others.

GREGORY.

O n c e——?

JULIAN.

So long as he was only my brother. But now——; is he not Caesar? Gregory,—Basil,—oh, my beloved friends,—I tremble for my life, I draw every breath in fear, because of Gallus Caesar. And you ask me to defy him to his face, me, whose very existence is a danger to him?

GREGORY.

Why came you to Athens? You gave out loudly in all quarters that Prince Julian was setting forth from Constantinople to do battle with philosophy, falsely so called —to champion Christian truth against heathen falsehood. What have you done of all this?

JULIAN.

Ah, 'twas not here that the battle was to be.

GREGORY.

No, it was not here,—not with phrase against phrase, not with book against book, not with the idle word-fencing of the lecture-room! No, Julian, you must go forth into life itself, with your own life in your hands——

JULIAN.

I see it; I see it!

GREGORY.

Yes, as Libanius sees it! You mocked at him. You said he knew the essence and the outward signs of all the virtues, but his doctrine was only a doctrine to him. How much of y o u belongs to God? How much may the Emperor demand?

JULIAN.

You said yourself it was unseemly——

GREGORY.

Towards whom? Towards God or the Emperor?

JULIAN.

[*Quickly.*] Well then: shall we go together?

GREGORY.

[*Evasively.*] I have my little circle; I have my family to watch over. I have neither the strength nor the gifts for a larger task.

JULIAN.

[*Is about to answer; suddenly he listens towards the right, and calls out.*] To the bacchanal!

BASIL.

Julian!

JULIAN.

To the bacchanal, friends!

[GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS *looks at him a moment; then he goes off through the colonnade to the left. A large troop of scholars, with the newcomers among them, rushes into the square, amid shouts and noise.*

BASIL.

[*Coming nearer.*] Julian, will you listen to me?

JULIAN.

See, see! They have taken their new friends to the bath, and anointed their hair. See how they swing their cudgels; how they yell and thump the pavement! What say you, Pericles? Methinks I can hear your wrathful shade——

BASIL.

Come, come!

JULIAN.

Ah, look at the man they are driving naked among them. Now come the dancing-girls. Ah, do you see what——!

BASIL.

Fie! Fie!—turn your eyes away!

[*Evening has fallen. The whole troop settles down in the square beside the fountain. Wine and fruits are brought. Painted damsels dance by torchlight.*

JULIAN.

[*After a short silence.*] Tell me, Basil, why was the heathen sin so beautiful?

BASIL.

You are mistaken, friend; beautiful things have been said and sung of this heathen sin; but it was not beautiful.

JULIAN.

Oh, how can you say so? Was not Alcibiades beautiful when, flushed with wine, he stormed at night like a young god through the streets of Athens? Was he not beautiful in his very audacity when he insulted Hermes and battered at the citizens' doors,—when he summoned their wives and daughters forth, while within the women trembled, and, in breathless, panting silence, wished for nothing better than to——?

BASIL.

Oh listen to me, I beg and entreat you.

JULIAN.

Was not Socrates beautiful in the symposium? And Plato, and all the joyous revellers? Yet they did such things, as, but to be accused of them, would make those

Christian swine out there call down upon themselves the curse of God. Think of Oedipus, Medea, Leda——

BASIL.

Poetry, poetry; you confound fancies with facts.

JULIAN.

Are not mind and will in poetry subject to the same laws as in fact? And then look at our holy scriptures, both the old and new. Was sin beautiful in Sodom and Gomorrah? Did not Jehovah's fire avenge what Socrates shrank not from?—Oh, as I live this life of revel and riot, I often wonder whether truth is indeed the enemy of beauty!

BASIL.

And in such an hour can you sigh after beauty? Can you so easily forget what you have just heard——?

JULIAN.

[*Stopping his ears.*] Not a word more of those horrors! We will shake off all thoughts of Antioch——

Tell me, what does Makrina write further? There was something more; I remember, you said——; what was it you called the rest of her news?

BASIL.

Strange.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes;—what was it?

BASIL.

She writes of Maximus in Ephesus——

JULIAN.

[*Eagerly.*] The Mystic?

BASIL.

Yes; that inscrutable man. He has appeared once more; this time in Ephesus. All the region around is in a ferment. Maximus is on all lips. Either he is a juggler or he has made a baleful compact with certain spirits. Even Christians are strangely allured by his impious signs and wonders.

JULIAN.

More, more; I entreat you!

BASIL.

There is no more about him. Makrina only writes that she sees in the coming again of Maximus a proof that we are under the wrath of the Lord. She believes that great afflictions are in store for us, by reason of our sins.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes, yes!—Tell me, Basil: your sister is surely a remarkable woman.

BASIL.

She is, indeed.

JULIAN.

When you repeat to me passages from her letters, I seem to be listening to something full and perfect, such as I have long sighed for. Tell me, is she still bent on renouncing this world, and living in the wilderness?

BASIL.

That is her steadfast intent.

JULIAN.

Is it possible? She on whom all gifts seem to have been lavished? She who, 'tis known, is both young and beautiful; she who has riches in prospect, and in possession such learning as is very rare in a woman! Do you know, Basil, I long to see her? What has she to do in the wilderness?

BASIL.

I have told you how her affianced lover died. She regards him as her expectant bridegroom, to whom she owes her every thought, and whom she is pledged to meet unsullied.

JULIAN.

Strange how many feel the attraction of solitude in these times.—When you write to Makrina, you may tell her that I too——

BASIL.

She knows that, Julian; but she does not believe it.

JULIAN.

Why not? What does she write?

BASIL.

I pray you, friend, spare me——

JULIAN.

If you love me, do not hide from me one word she writes.

BASIL.

[*Giving him the letter.*] Read, if you must—it begins there.

JULIAN.

[*Reads.*] "Whenever you write of the Emperor's young kinsman, who is your friend, my soul is filled with a great and radiant joy——" O Basil! lend me your eyes; read for me.

BASIL.

[*Reading.*] "Your account of the fearless confidence wherewith he came to Athens was to me as a picture from the ancient chronicles. Yes, I see in him David born again, to smite the champions of the heathen. God's spirit watch over him in the strife, now and for ever."

JULIAN.

[*Grasping his arm.*] Enough of that! She too? What is it that you all, as with one mouth, demand of me? Have I sealed you a bond to do battle with the lions of power——?

BASIL.

How comes it that all believers look towards you in breathless expectation?

JULIAN.

[*Paces once or twice up and down the colonnade, then stops and stretches out his hand for the letter.*] Give it to me; let me see. [*Reading.*] "God's spirit watch over him in the strife, now and for ever."—

Oh, Basil, if I could——! But I feel like Daedalus, between sky and sea. An appalling height and an abys-

mal depth.—What sense is there in these voices calling to me, from east and west, that I must save Christendom? Where is it, this Christendom that I am to save? With the Emperor or with Caesar? I think their deeds cry out, "No, no!" Among the powerful and high-born;—among those sensual and effeminate courtiers who fold their hands over their full bellies, and quaver: "Was the Son of God created out of nothing?" Or among the men of enlightenment, those who, like you and me, have drunk in beauty and learning from the heathen fountains? Do not most of our fellows lean to the Arian heresy, which the Emperor himself so greatly favours?—And then the whole ragged rabble of the Empire, who rage against the temples, who massacre heathens and the children of heathens! Is it for Christ's sake? Ha-ha! see how they fall to fighting among themselves for the spoils of the slain.—Ask Makrina if Christendom is to be sought in the wilderness,—on the pillar where the stylite-saint stands on one leg? Or is it in the cities? Perhaps among those bakers in Constantinople who lately took to their fists to decide whether the Trinity consists of three individuals or of three hypostases!—Which of all these would Christ acknowledge if he came down to earth again?—Out with your Diogenes-lantern, Basil! Enlighten this pitchy darkness.—Where is Christendom?

BASIL.

Seek the answer where it is ever to be found in evil days.

JULIAN.

Hold me not aloof from the well of your wisdom! Slake my thirst, if you can. Where shall I seek and find?

BASIL.

In the writings of holy men.

JULIAN.

The same despairing answer. Books,—always books! When I came to Libanius, it was: books, books! I come to you,—books, books, books! Stones for bread! I cannot live on books;—it is life I hunger for,—face-to-face communion with the spirit. Was it a book that made Saul a seer? Was it not a flood of light that enveloped him, a vision, a voice——?

BASIL.

Do you forget the vision and the voice which that Agathon of Makellon——?

JULIAN.

An enigmatic message; an oracle I cannot interpret. Was *I* the chosen one? The "heir to the empire," it said. And what empire——? That matter is beset with a thousand uncertainties. Only this I know: Athens is not the lion's den. But where, where? Oh, I grope like Saul in the darkness. If Christ would have aught of me, he must speak plainly. Let me touch the nail-wound——

BASIL.

And yet it is written——

JULIAN.

[*With a gesture of impatience.*] I know all that is written. This "it is written" is not the living truth.

Do you not feel disgust and nausea, as on board ship in a windless swell, heaving to and fro, between life and written doctrine, and heathen wisdom and beauty? There must come a new revelation. Or a revelation of something new. It m u s t come, I say;—the time is ripe.—Ah, a revelation! Oh, Basil, could your prayers call down t h a t upon me! A martyr's death, if need be——! A martyr's death—ah, it makes me dizzy with its sweetness; the crown of thorns on my brow——! [*He clasps his head with both hands, feels the wreath of roses, which he tears off, bethinks himself long, and says softly:*] That! I had forgotten that! [*Casting the wreath away.*] One thing alone have I learnt in Athens.

BASIL.

What, Julian?

JULIAN.

The old beauty is no longer beautiful, and the new truth is no longer true.

LIBANIUS *enters hastily through the colonnade on the right.*

LIBANIUS.

[*Still in the distance.*] Now we have him; now we have him!

JULIAN.

Him? I thought you would have had them both.

LIBANIUS.

Both of whom?

JULIAN.

Milo's sons.

LIBANIUS.

Ah, yes, I have them too. But we have h i m, my Julian!

JULIAN.

Whom, dear brother?

LIBANIUS.

He has caught himself in his own net!

JULIAN.

Aha—a philosopher then?

LIBANIUS.

The enemy of all wisdom.

JULIAN.

Who, who, I ask?

LIBANIUS.

Do you really not know? Have you not heard the news about Maximus?

JULIAN.

Maximus? Oh, pray tell me——

LIBANIUS.

Who could fail to see whither that restless visionary was tending,—step by step towards madness——?

JULIAN.

In other words, towards the highest wisdom.

LIBANIUS.

Ah, that is a figure of speech. But now is the time to act, to seize the opportunity. You, our dearly-prized Julian, you are the man. You are the Emperor's near kinsman. The hopes of all true friends of wisdom are fixed upon you, both here and in Nikomedia——

JULIAN.

Listen, oh excellent Libanius,—seeing I am not omniscient——

LIBANIUS.

Know, then, that Maximus has lately made open avowal of what lies at the bottom of his teaching.

JULIAN.

And do you blame him for that?

LIBANIUS.

He has averred that he has power over spirits and shades of the dead.

JULIAN.

[*Grasping his cloak.*] Libanius!

LIBANIUS.

All on board the ship were full of the most marvellous stories, and here—— [*He shows a letter*], here, my colleague, Eusebius, writes at length on the subject.

JULIAN.

Spirits and shades——

LIBANIUS.

At Ephesus lately, in a large assembly both of his partisans and his opponents, Maximus applied forbidden arts to the statue of Hecate. It took place in the goddess's temple. Eusebius writes that he himself was present, and saw everything from first to last. All was in pitch-black darkness. Maximus uttered strange incantations; then he chanted a hymn, which no one understood. Then the marble torch in the statue's hand burst into flame——

BASIL.

Impious doings!

JULIAN.

[*Breathlessly.*] And then——?

LIBANIUS.

In the strong bluish light, they all saw the statue's face come to life and smile at them.

JULIAN.

What more?

LIBANIUS.

Terror seized on the minds of most. All rushed towards the doors. Many have lain sick or raving ever since. But he himself—would you believe it, Julian?—in spite of the fate that befell his two brothers in Constantinople, he goes boldly forward on his reckless and scandalous way.

JULIAN.

Scandalous? Call you that way scandalous? Is not this the end of all wisdom? Communion between spirit and spirit——

BASIL.

Oh, dear, misguided friend——!

LIBANIUS.

More than scandalous, I call it! What is Hecate? What are the gods, as a whole, in the eyes of enlightened humanity? We have happily left far behind us the blind old singer's days. Maximus ought to know better than that. Has not Plato—and we others after him—shed the light of interpretation over the whole? Is it not scandalous now, in our own days, to seek to enshroud afresh in riddles and misty dreams this admirable, palpable, and, let me add, this laboriously constructed edifice of ideas and interpretations which we, as lovers of wisdom, as a school, as——

JULIAN.

[*Wildly.*] Basil, farewell! I see a light on my path!

BASIL.

[*Flinging his arms around him.*] I will not let you go; I will hold you fast!

JULIAN.

[*Extricating himself from his grasp.*] No one shall withhold me;—kick not against the pricks——

LIBANIUS.

What frenzy is this? Friend, brother, colleague, whither would you go?

JULIAN.

Thither, thither, where torches light themselves and where statues smile!

LIBANIUS.

And you can do this! You, Julian, our pride, our light, our hope,—you can think of rushing to bewildered Ephesus, to give yourself into a juggler's power! Know that in the hour you so deeply debase yourself, in that same hour you throw away all that bright renown for learning and eloquence which, during these years in Pergamos and Nikomedia, and especially here in the great school of Athens——

JULIAN.

Oh, the school, the school! Do you pore over your books;—you have pointed my way to the man for whom I have been seeking.

[*He goes off hastily through the colonnade to the left.*

LIBANIUS.

[*Looking after him awhile.*] This princely youth is a menace to enlightenment.

BASIL.

[*Half to himself.*] Prince Julian is a menace to more than that.

ACT THIRD

In Ephesus. A brightly lighted hall in PRINCE JULIAN'S *dwelling. The entrance from the vestibule is on the right side; further back, a smaller door, covered by a curtain. On the left, a door, which leads to the inner part of the house. The wall in the back is pierced with an archway, through which a small enclosed court is visible, decked with small statues.*

Servants prepare a festal supper, and lay cushions round the table. The Chamberlain, EUTHERIUS, *stands at the entrance, and, with much ceremony, half forces* GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS *and* BASIL OF CAESAREA *to enter.*

EUTHERIUS.

Yes, yes; I assure you it is as I say.

GREGORY.

Impossible! Do not make sport of us.

BASIL.

You are jesting, friend! How can your master expect us? Not a creature knew of our leaving Athens; nothing has detained us on our way; we have kept pace with the clouds and the wild cranes.

EUTHERIUS.

Look around; see yonder table. His daily fare is herbs and bread.

GREGORY.

Ay, truly; all our senses bear you witness;—wine-flagons, wreathed with flowers and leaves; lamps and fruits; incense filling the hall with its odour; flute-players before the door——

EUTHERIUS.

Early this morning he sent for me. He seemed unwontedly happy, for he paced the room to and fro, rubbing his hands. "Prepare a rich banquet," said he, "for before evening I look for two friends from Athens——"

[He glances towards the door on the left, is suddenly silent, and draws back respectfully.

BASIL.

Is he there?

[EUTHERIUS *nods in answer; then gives a sign to the servants to withdraw; they go out by the larger door on the right; he follows.*

PRINCE JULIAN *shortly afterwards enters from the left. He is dressed in long, Oriental garb; his whole demeanour is vivacious, and betrays strong inward excitement.*

JULIAN.

[*Going towards them, and greeting them with great warmth.*] I see you! I have you! Thanks, thanks, for sending your spirits to herald your bodies!

GREGORY.

Julian!

BASIL.

My friend and brother!

JULIAN.

I have been like a lover, languishing for the pressure of your hands. The court vermin, eager for certain persons' applause, called me an ape;—oh, would I had an ape's four hands, to squeeze yours all at once!

GREGORY.

But explain——; your servants meet us with flutes before the door, want to lead us to the bath, to aniont our hair and deck us with roses——

JULIAN.

I saw you last night. The moon was full, you see,—and then is the spirit always strangely alert within me. I sat at the table in my library, and had fallen asleep, weary, oh! so weary, my friends, with research and writing. Of a sudden it seemed as though a storm-wind filled the house; the curtain was swept flapping aloft, and I looked out into the night, far over the sea. I heard sweet singing; and the singers were two large birds, with women's faces. They flew slanting towards the shore; there they dropped gently earthwards; the bird-forms melted away like a white mist, and, in a soft, glimmering light, I saw you two.

GREGORY.

Are you sure of all this?

JULIAN.

Were you thinking of me? Were you speaking of me last night?

BASIL.

Yes, yes—forward in the prow——

JULIAN.

What time of the night was it?

GREGORY.

What was the time of your vision?

JULIAN.

An hour after midnight.

GREGORY.

[*With a look at* BASIL.] Strange!

JULIAN.

[*Rubbing his hands, and walking up and down the room.*] You see! Ha-ha; you see?

BASIL.

[*Following him with his eyes.*] Ah, then it is true——

JULIAN.

What? What is true?

BASIL.

The rumour of the mysterious arts you practise here.

JULIAN.

Oh, what will not rumour exaggerate?—But tell me, what has rumour found to say? I am told there are

many reports afloat concerning me. If I could believe some people's assurances, it would seem that there are few men in the empire so much talked about as I.

GREGORY.

That you may safely believe.

JULIAN.

And what says Libanius to all this? He could never endure that the multitude should be busied with any one but himself. And what say all my never-to-be-forgotten friends in Athens? They know I am in disgrace with the Emperor and the whole court?

GREGORY.

You? I have frequent intelligence from the court; but my brother Caesarius makes no mention of that.

JULIAN.

I cannot interpret it otherwise, good Gregory! From all sides they think it needful to watch me. The other day, Gallus Caesar sent his chaplain Aëtius hither, to find out whether I hold fast to the orthodox faith.

BASIL.

Well——?

JULIAN.

I am seldom absent from matins in the church. Moreover, I reckon the martyrs among the noblest of men; for truly it is no light matter to endure so great torments, ay, and death itself, for the sake of one's creed. On the whole, I believe Aëtius departed well content with me.

BASIL.

[*Grasping his hand.*] Julian,—for the sake of our true friendship,—open your heart fully to us.

JULIAN.

I am the happiest man on earth, dear friends! And Maximus—ay, he is rightly named—Maximus is the greatest man that has ever lived.

GREGORY.

[*Preparing to depart.*] We only wished to see you, my lord!

JULIAN.

Can this estrange brother from brother? You shrink in affright from the inexplicable. Oh, I do not wonder. So I, too, shrank before my eyes were opened, and I divined that which is the kernel of life.

BASIL.

What do you call the kernel of life?

JULIAN.

Maximus knows it. In him is the new revelation.

BASIL.

And it has been imparted to you?

JULIAN.

Almost. I am on the eve of learning it. This very night Maximus has promised me——

GREGORY.

Maximus is a visionary, or else he is deceiving you——!

JULIAN.

How dare you judge of these hidden things? They are beyond y o u r learning, my Gregory! Fearful is the way into the glory of glories. Those dreamers in Eleusis were near the right track; Maximus found it, and I after him—by his help. I have wandered through chasms of darkness. A dead swampy water lay on my left—I believe it was a stream that had forgotten to flow. Piercing voices shrilled through the night confusedly, suddenly, and, as it were, without cause. Now and then I saw a bluish light; dreadful shapes floated past me;—I went on and on in deathly fear; but I endured the trial to the end.—

Since then—oh, beloved ones—with this my body transformed to spirit, I have passed far into the land of paradise; I have heard the angels chant their hymns of praise; I have gazed at the midmost light——

GREGORY.

Woe to this ungodly Maximus! Woe to this devil-devoted heathen juggler!

JULIAN.

Blindness, blindness! Maximus pays homage to his precursor and brother—to both his great brothers, the law-giver of Sinai and the seer of Nazareth.——

Would you know how the spirit of realisation filled me?—It happened on a night of prayer and fasting. I

perceived that I was wafted far—far out into space, and beyond time; for there was broad and sun-shimmering day around me, and I stood alone on a ship, with drooping sails, in the midst of the glassy, gleaming Aegean sea. Islands towered aloft in the distance, like dim, still banks of clouds, and the ship lay heavily, as though sleeping, upon the wine-blue plain.—

Then behold! the plain became more and more transparent, lighter, thinner; at last, it was no longer there, and my ship hung over a fearful, empty abyss. No verdure down there, no sunlight,—only the dead, black, slimy bottom of the sea, in all its ghastly nakedness.——

But above, in the boundless dome, which before had seemed to me empty,—t h e r e was life; there invisibility clothed itself in form, and silence became sound.—Then I grasped the great redeeming realisation.

GREGORY.

What realisation do you mean?

JULIAN.

That which is, is not; and that which is not, is.

BASIL.

Oh, you are going to wreck and ruin in this maze of mists and gleams!

JULIAN.

I? Do not miracles happen? Do not both omens and certain strange appearances among the stars declare that the divine will destines me to issues yet unrevealed?

GREGORY.

Do not believe such signs; you cannot know whose work they are.

JULIAN.

Am I not to believe in fortunate omens which events have already borne out?

[*He draws them nearer to him, and says softly.*

Know, my friends, that a great revolution is at hand. Gallus Caesar and I shall ere long share the dominion of the earth—he as Emperor, and I as—what shall I call it? the unborn cannot be called by a name, for it has none. So no more of this till the time be fulfilled. But of Caesar I dare speak.—Have you heard of the vision for which Apollinaris, a citizen of Sidon, has been imprisoned and put to the torture?

BASIL.

No, no; how can we know——?

JULIAN.

Apollinaris declared that he heard some one knocking many times at his door by night. He arose, and went out from his house; and lo! there he saw an apparition—whether man or woman, he could not tell. And the apparition spoke to him, and bade him make ready a purple robe, such as newly-chosen rulers wear. But when Apollinaris, in affright, would have declined so dangerous a task, the apparition vanished, and only a voice cried: "Go, go, Apollinaris, and speedily prepare the purple robe."

GREGORY.

Was this the sign that you said events had borne out?

JULIAN.

[*Nodding slowly.*] Seven days later Caesar's wife died in Bithynia. Constantina has always been his bad angel; therefore she had to be removed, in accordance with the change in the divine will. Three weeks after Constantina's death, the Emperor's emissary, the tribune Scudilo, came with a great retinue to Antioch, greeted Gallus Caesar with imperial honours, and invited him, in the Emperor's name, to visit the imperial camp at Rome.—Caesar's journey from province to province is now like a conqueror's progress. In Constantinople he has held races in the hippodrome, and the multitude loudly acclaimed him when he, though as yet but Caesar by title, stood forth after the manner of the earlier Emperors, and gave the crown to Corax, the winner in the race. Thus marvellously does God again exalt our house, which had sunk under sin and persecution.

GREGORY.

Strange! In Athens other reports were abroad.

JULIAN.

I have certain information. The purple robe will soon be needed, Gregory! How, then, can I doubt as to the things which Maximus has foretold as near at hand for me? To-night the last veil falls. Here shall the great enigma be made manifest. Oh, stay with me, my brothers—stay with me through this night of anxiety and expectation! When Maximus comes you shall witness——

BASIL.

Never!

GREGORY.

It cannot be; we are on our way home to Cappadocia.

JULIAN.

And what has driven you in such haste from Greece?

BASIL.

My mother is a widow, Julian!

GREGORY.

My father is feeble, both in body and mind; he needs my support.

JULIAN.

Oh, at least remain at the hostelry; only until to-morrow——!

GREGORY.

Impossible; our travelling companions start at daybreak.

JULIAN.

At daybreak? Before midnight the day might dawn for you.

BASIL.

Julian, let me not set forth in too great sorrow of soul. Tell me,—when Maximus has interpreted all riddles for you,—what then?

JULIAN.

Do you remember that river whereof Strabo writes—that river which rises in the Lybian mountains? It grows,

and grows in its course; but when it is at its greatest, it oozes into the desert sands, and buries itself in the entrails of the earth, whence it arose.

BASIL.

Say not that you long for death, Julian!

JULIAN.

What you slavishly hope for after death, 'tis the aim of the great mystery to win for all the initiated, here in our earthly life. 'Tis regeneration that Maximus and his disciples seek,—'tis our lost likeness to the godhead. Wherefore so full of doubt, my brothers? Why do you stand there as though before something insurmountable? I know what I know. In each successive generation there has been o n e soul wherein the pure Adam has been born again; he was strong in Moses the lawgiver; in the Macedonian Alexander he had power to subdue the world; he was well-nigh perfect in Jesus of Nazareth. But see, Basil—[*He grasps him by the arm*]—all of them lacked what is promised to m e—the pure woman!

BASIL.

[*Freeing himself.*] Julian, Julian!

GREGORY.

Blasphemer—to this has your pride of heart brought you!

BASIL.

Oh, Gregory, he is sick and beside himself!

JULIAN.

Why all this scornful doubt? Is it my small stature that witnesses against me? Ha, ha; I tell you this gross and fleshly generation shall pass away. That which is to come shall be conceived rather in the soul than in the body. In the first Adam, soul and body were equally balanced, as in those statues of the god Apollo. Since then the balance has been lost. Was not Moses tongue-tied? Had not his arms to be supported when he held them up in imprecation, there by the Red Sea? Did not the Macedonian need ever to be fired by strong drinks and other artificial aids? And Jesus of Nazareth, too? Was he not feeble in body? Did he not fall asleep in the ship, whilst the others kept awake? Did he not faint under the cross, that cross which the Jew Simon carried with ease? The two thieves did not faint.—You call yourselves believers, and yet have so little faith in miraculous revelation. Wait, wait—you shall see; the Bride shall surely be given me; and then—hand in hand will we go forth to the east, where some say that Helios is born,—we will hide ourselves in the solitudes, as the godhead hides itself, seek out the grove on the banks of Euphrates, find it, and t h e r e—oh glory of glories!—thence shall a new race, perfect in beauty and in balance, go forth over the earth; there, ye book-worshipping doubters, t h e r e shall the empire of the spirit be founded!

BASIL.

Oh, well may I wring my hands in sorrow for your sake. Are you the same Julian who, three years ago, came out of Constantinople?

JULIAN.

Then I was blind, as you are now; I knew only the way that stops short at doctrine.

GREGORY.

Know you where your present way ends?

JULIAN.

Where the path and the goal are one.—For the last time, Gregory, Basil—I implore you to stay with me. The vision I had last night,—that and many other things, point to a mysterious bond between us. To you, my Basil, I had so much to say. You are the head of your house; and who knows whether all the blessings that are promised me—may not come through you and yours——

BASIL.

Never! No one with my good will shall ever be led away by your frenzies and your wild dreams.

JULIAN.

Ah, why talk of will? I see a hand writing on the wall; soon I shall interpret the writing.

GREGORY.

Come, Basil.

JULIAN.

[*With outstretched arms.*] Oh, my friends, my friends!

GREGORY.

Between us there is a gulf from this day forward.

[*He drags* BASIL *with him; both go out to the right.*

JULIAN.

[*Looking after them.*] Ay, go! Go, go!—What do you two learned men know? What bring you from the city of wisdom? You, my strong, masterful Gregory,—and you, Basil, more girl than man—you know only two streets in Athens, the street to the schools, and the street to the church; of the third street towards Eleusis and further, you know naught; and still less——. Ah!

The curtain on the right is drawn aside. Two servants in eastern costume bring in a tall, veiled object, which they place in the corner, behind the table. Shortly after, MAXIMUS THE MYSTIC *enters by the same door. He is a lean man of middle height, with a bronzed, hawk-like face; his hair and beard are much grizzled, but his thick eyebrows and moustache still retain their pitch-black colour. He wears a pointed cap and a long black robe; in his hand he carries a white wand.*

MAXIMUS *goes, without heeding* JULIAN, *up to the veiled object, stops, and makes a sign to the servants; they retire noiselessly.*

JULIAN.

[*Softly.*] At last!

[MAXIMUS *draws the veil away, revealing a bronze lamp on a high tripod; then he takes out a little silver pitcher, and pours oil into the lamp-bowl. The lamp lights of itself, and burns with a strong reddish glare.*

JULIAN.

[*In eager expectancy.*] Is the time come?

MAXIMUS.

[*Without looking at him.*] Art thou pure in soul and body?

JULIAN.

I have fasted and anointed myself.

MAXIMUS.

Then may the night's high festival begin!

[*He gives a sign; dancing-girls and flute-players appear in the outer court. Music and dancing continue during what follows.*

JULIAN.

Maximus,—what is this?

MAXIMUS.

Roses in the hair! Sparkling wine! See, see the lovely limbs at play!

JULIAN.

And amid this whirl of the senses you would——?

MAXIMUS.

Sin lies only in thy sense of sinfulness.

JULIAN.

Roses in the hair! Sparkling wine! [*He casts himself down on one of the couches beside the table, drains a full goblet, puts it hastily from him, and asks:*] Ah! What was in the wine?

MAXIMUS.

A spark of that fire which Prometheus stole.
[*He reclines at the opposite side of the table.*

JULIAN.

My senses exchange their functions; I hear brightness and I see music.

MAXIMUS.

Wine is the soul of the grape. The freed and yet willing captive. Logos in Pan!

THE DANCING-GIRLS.

[*Singing in the court.*]

Would'st thou know liberty?
Drain Bacchus' blood;—
Rock on the rhythm-sea,
Float with its flood!

JULIAN.

[*Drinking.*] Yes, yes; there is freedom in intoxication. Canst thou interpret this rapture?

MAXIMUS.

This intoxication is thy marriage with the soul of nature.

JULIAN.

Sweet riddle; tempting, alluring——! What was that? Why didst thou laugh?

MAXIMUS.

I?

JULIAN.

There is whispering on my left hand! The silk cushions rustle—— [*Springing half up with a pale face.*] Maximus, we are not alone!

MAXIMUS.

[*Loudly.*] We are five at table!

JULIAN.

Symposium with the spirits!

MAXIMUS.

With the shades.

JULIAN.

Come, my guests!

MAXIMUS.

Not now. Hark, hark!

JULIAN.

What is that? There is a rushing, as of a storm, through the house——

MAXIMUS.

[*Shrieks.*] Julian! Julian! Julian!

JULIAN.

Speak, speak! What is befalling us?

MAXIMUS.

The hour of annunciation is upon thee!

JULIAN.

[*Springing up and shrinking far back from the table.*] Ah!

[*The table lamps seem on the point of extinction; over the great bronze lamp rises a bluish circle of light.*

MAXIMUS.

[*Casting himself wholly down.*] Thine eye towards the light!

JULIAN.

Yonder?

MAXIMUS.

Yes, yes!

THE GIRLS' SONG.

[*Low, from the court.*]

Night spreads her snares for thee,
All-seeing night;
Laughing-eyed Luxury
Lures to delight.

JULIAN.

[*Staring at the radiance.*] Maximus! Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

[*Softly.*] Seest thou aught?

JULIAN.

Yes.

MAXIMUS.

What seest thou?

JULIAN.

I see a shining countenance in the light.

MAXIMUS.

Man, or woman?

JULIAN.

I know not.

MAXIMUS.

Speak to it.

JULIAN.

Dare I!

MAXIMUS.

Speak! speak!

JULIAN.

[*Advancing.*] Why was I born?

A VOICE IN THE LIGHT.

To serve the spirit.

MAXIMUS.

Does it answer?

JULIAN.

Yes, yes.

MAXIMUS.

Ask further.

JULIAN.

What is my mission?

THE VOICE.

To establish the empire.

JULIAN.

What empire?

THE VOICE.

The empire.

JULIAN.

And by what way?

THE VOICE.

By the way of freedom.

JULIAN.

Speak clearly! What is the way of freedom?

THE VOICE.

The way of necessity.

JULIAN.

And by what power?

THE VOICE.

By w i l l i n g.

JULIAN.

W h a t shall I will?

THE VOICE.

What thou m u s t.

JULIAN.

It pales; it vanishes——! [*Coming closer.*] Speak, speak! What must I will?

THE VOICE.

[*Wailing.*] Julian!

[*The circle of light passes away; the table lamps burn as before.*

MAXIMUS.

[*Looking up.*] Gone?

JULIAN.

Gone.

MAXIMUS.

Dost thou n o w see clearly?

JULIAN.

Now less than ever. I hang in the void over the yawning deep—midway between light and darkness. [*He lies down again.*] What is the empire?

MAXIMUS.

There are three empires.

JULIAN.

Three?

MAXIMUS.

First that empire which was founded on the tree of knowledge; then that which was founded on the tree of the cross——

JULIAN.

And the third?

MAXIMUS.

The third is the empire of the great mystery; that empire which shall be founded on the tree of knowledge and

the tree of the cross together, because it hates and loves them both, and because it has its living sources under Adam's grove and under Golgotha.

JULIAN.

And this empire shall come——?

MAXIMUS.

It stands on the threshold. I have counted and counted——

JULIAN.

[*Breaking off sharply.*] The whispering again! Who are my guests?

MAXIMUS.

The three corner-stones under the wrath of necessity.

JULIAN.

Who, who?

MAXIMUS.

The three great helpers in denial.

JULIAN.

Name them!

MAXIMUS.

I cannot; I know them not;—but I could show them to thee——

JULIAN.

Then show me them! At once, Maximus——!

MAXIMUS.

Beware——;

JULIAN.

At once; at once! I will see them; I will speak with them, one by one.

MAXIMUS.

The guilt be on thy head.

[*He waves his wand and calls.*

Take shape and come to sight, thou first-elected lamb of sacrifice!

JULIAN.

Ah!

MAXIMUS.

[*With veiled face.*] What seest thou?

JULIAN.

[*In a low voice.*] There he lies; just by the corner.—He is great as Hercules, and beautiful,—yet no, not——

[*Hesitatingly.*

Speak to me if thou canst!

A VOICE.

What wouldst thou know?

JULIAN.

What was thy task in life?

THE VOICE.

My sin.

JULIAN.

Why didst thou sin?

THE VOICE.

Why was I not my brother?

JULIAN.

Palter not with me. Why didst thou sin?

THE VOICE.

Why was I myself?

JULIAN.

And what didst thou will, being thyself?

THE VOICE.

What I must.

JULIAN.

And wherefore must thou?

THE VOICE.

I was myself.

JULIAN.

Thou art sparing of words.

MAXIMUS.

[*Without looking up.*] *In vino veritas.*

JULIAN.

Thou hast hit it, Maximus?

[*He pours forth a full goblet in front of the empty seat.*

Bathe thee in the fumes of wine, my pallid guest! Refresh thee. Feel, feel—it mounts aloft like the smoke of sacrifice.

THE VOICE.

The smoke of sacrifice does not always m o u n t.

JULIAN.

Why does that scar redden on thy brow? Nay, nay,—draw not the hair over it. What is it?

THE VOICE.

The mark.

JULIAN.

H'm; no more of that. And what fruit has thy sin borne?

THE VOICE.

The most glorious.

JULIAN.

What callest thou the most glorious?

THE VOICE.

Life.

JULIAN.

And the ground of life?

THE VOICE.

Death.

JULIAN.

And of death?

THE VOICE.

[*Losing itself as in a sigh.*] Ah, t h a t is the riddle!

JULIAN.

Gone!

MAXIMUS.

[*Looking up.*] Gone?

JULIAN.

Yes.

MAXIMUS.

Didst thou know him?

JULIAN.

Yes.

MAXIMUS.

Who was it?

JULIAN.

Cain.

MAXIMUS.

By t h a t way, then! Ask no more!

JULIAN.

[*With an impatient gesture.*] The second, Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

No, no, no; I will not!

JULIAN.

The second, I say! Thou hast sworn that I should fathom the meaning of certain things. The second, Maximus. I will see him; I will know my guests!

MAXIMUS.

Thou hast willed it, not I. [*He waves his wand.*
Arise and come to light, thou willing slave, thou who didst help at the world's next great turning-point.

JULIAN.

[*Gazes for a moment into the empty space; suddenly he makes a gesture of repulsion towards the seat at his side, and says in a low voice:*] No nearer!

MAXIMUS.

[*Who has turned his back.*] Dost thou see him?

JULIAN.

Yes.

MAXIMUS.

How dost thou see him?

JULIAN.

I see him as a red-bearded man. His garments are rent, and he has a rope round his neck——
Speak to him, Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

'Tis thou must speak.

JULIAN.

What wast thou in life?

A VOICE.

[*Close beside him.*] The twelfth wheel of the world-chariot.

JULIAN.

The twelfth? The fifth is reckoned useless.

THE VOICE.

But for me, whither had the chariot rolled?

JULIAN.

Whither did it roll by means of thee?

THE VOICE.

Into the glory of glories.

JULIAN.

Why didst thou help?

THE VOICE.

Because I w i l l e d.

JULIAN.

What didst thou will?

THE VOICE.

What I m u s t.

JULIAN.

Who chose thee?

THE VOICE.

The master.

JULIAN.

Did the master foreknow when he chose thee?

THE VOICE.

Ah, t h a t is the riddle! [*A short silence.*

MAXIMUS.

Thou art silent.

JULIAN.

He is no longer here.

MAXIMUS.

[*Looking up.*] Didst thou know him?

JULIAN.

Yes.

MAXIMUS.

How was he called in life?

JULIAN.

Judas Iscariot.

MAXIMUS.

[*Springing up.*] The abyss blossoms; the night betrays itself!

JULIAN.

[*Shrieks to him.*] Forth with the third!

MAXIMUS.

He shall come! [*He waves the wand.*

Come forth, thou third corner-stone! Come forth, thou third great freed-man under necessity!

[*He casts himself down again on the couch, and turns his face away.*

What seest thou?

JULIAN.

I see nothing.

MAXIMUS.

And yet he is here. [*He waves the wand again.*
By Solomon's seal, by the eye in the triangle—I conjure thee—come to sight!——
What seest thou now?

JULIAN.

Nothing, nothing!

MAXIMUS.

[*Waving his wand once more.*] Come forth, thou——!
[*He stops suddenly, utters a shriek, and springs up from the table.*
Ah! lightning in the night! I see it;—all art is in vain.

JULIAN.

[*Rising.*] Why? Speak, speak!

MAXIMUS.

The third is not yet among the shades.

JULIAN.

He lives?

MAXIMUS.

Yes, he lives.

JULIAN.

And h e r e, sayest thou——!

MAXIMUS.

Here, or there, or among the unborn;—I know not——

JULIAN.

[*Rushing at him.*] Thou liest! Thou art deceiving me! H e r e, here thou saidst——!

MAXIMUS.

Let go my cloak!

JULIAN.

Then it is thou, or I! But which of us?

MAXIMUS.

Let go my cloak, Julian!

JULIAN.

Which of us? Which? All hangs on that!

MAXIMUS.

Thou knowest more than I. What said the voice in the light?

JULIAN.

The voice in the light——!
[*With a cry.*] The empire! The empire! To found the empire——!

MAXIMUS.

The third empire!

JULIAN.

No; a thousand times no! Away, corrupter! I renounce thee and all thy works——

MAXIMUS.

And necessity?

JULIAN.

I defy necessity! I will not serve it! I am free, free, free![1]

[*A noise outside; the dancing-girls and flute-players take to flight.*

MAXIMUS.

[*Listening towards the right*] What is this alarm and shrieking——?

JULIAN.

Strange men are forcing their way into the house——

MAXIMUS.

They are maltreating your servants; they will murder us!

JULIAN.

Fear not; us no one can hurt.

THE CHAMBERLAIN EUTHERIUS.

[*Comes hastily across the court.*] My lord, my lord!

JULIAN.

What is that noise without?

EUTHERIUS.

Strange men have surrounded the house; they have set a watch at all the doors; they are making their way in—almost by force. Here they come, my lord! Here they are!

The QUAESTOR LEONTES, *with a large and richly-attired retinue, enters from the right.*

[1] See Ibsen's *Correspondence*, Letter 115, to George Brandes.

LEONTES.

Pardon, a thousand pardons, most gracious lord——

JULIAN.

[*Recoiling a step.*] What do I see?

LEONTES.

Your servants would have hindered me from entering; and as my errand was of the utmost moment——

JULIAN.

You here, in Ephesus, my excellent Leontes!

LEONTES.

I have travelled night and day, as the Emperor's envoy.

JULIAN.

[*Turning pale.*] To me? What would the Emperor with me? I swear I am unwitting of any crime. I am sick, Leontes! This man—[*Pointing to* MAXIMUS]—attends me as my physician.

LEONTES.

Permit me, my gracious lord——!

JULIAN.

Why do you force your way into my house? What is the Emperor's will?

LEONTES.

His will is to gladden you, my lord, by a great and weighty announcement.

JULIAN.

I pray you, let me know what announcement you bring.

LEONTES.

[*Kneels.*] My most noble lord,—with praise to your good fortune and my own, I hail you Caesar.

THE QUAESTOR'S FOLLOWERS.

Long live Julian Caesar!

MAXIMUS.

Caesar!

JULIAN.

[*Retreating, with an exclamation.*] Caesar! Stand up, Leontes! What mad words are these!

LEONTES.

I do but deliver the Emperor's commands.

JULIAN.

I—I Caesar.—Ah, where is Gallus?

LEONTES.

Oh, do not ask me.

JULIAN.

Where is Gallus? Tell me, I conjure you,—where is Gallus?

LEONTES.

[*Standing up.*] Gallus Caesar is with his beloved wife.

JULIAN.

Dead?

LEONTES.

In bliss, with his wife.

JULIAN.

Dead! dead! Gallus dead! Dead in the midst of his triumphal progress! But when,—and where?

LEONTES.

Oh, my dear lord, spare me——

GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS.

[*Struggling with the guards at the door.*] I must go to him! Aside, I say!—Julian!

JULIAN.

Gregory, brother,—after all, you come again?

GREGORY.

Is it true, what rumour is scattering like a storm of arrows over the city?

JULIAN.

I am myself transfixed by one of its arrows. Dare I believe in this blending of good hap and of ill?

GREGORY.

For Christ's sake, bid the tempter avaunt!

JULIAN.

The Emperor's commands, Gregory!

GREGORY.

You will trample on your brother's bloody corpse——

JULIAN.

Bloody——?

GREGORY.

Know you it not? Gallus Caesar was murdered.

JULIAN.

[*Clasping his hands.*] Murdered?

LEONTES.

Ah, who is this audacious——?

JULIAN.

Murdered? Murdered? [*To* LEONTES.] Tell me he lies!

LEONTES.

Gallus Caesar has fallen through his own misdeeds.

JULIAN.

Murdered!—Who murdered him?

LEONTES.

What has occurred was inevitable, my noble lord. Gallus Caesar madly misused his power here in the East.

He was no longer content with his rank as Caesar. His conduct, both in Constantinople and elsewhere on his progress, showed clearly what was in his mind.

JULIAN.

'Tis not his crime I would know, but the rest.

LEONTES.

Oh, let me spare a brother's ears.

JULIAN.

A brother's ears can bear what a son's ears have borne. Who killed him?

LEONTES.

The tribune Scudilo, who escorted him, thought it advisable to have him executed.

JULIAN.

Where? Not in Rome?

LEONTES.

No, my lord; it happened on the journey thither,—in the city of Pola, in Illyria.

JULIAN.

[*Bowing himself.*] The Emperor is great and righteous.—The last of the race, Gregory!—The Emperor Constantius is great.

LEONTES.

[*Taking a purple robe from one of his attendants.*] Noble Caesar, deign to array yourself——

JULIAN.

Red! Away with it! Was it this he wore at Pola——?

LEONTES.

This comes fresh from Sidon.

JULIAN.

[*With a look at* MAXIMUS.] From Sidon! The purple robe——!

MAXIMUS.

Apollinaris's vision!

GREGORY.

Julian! Julian!

LEONTES.

See, this is sent to you by your kinsman, the Emperor. He bids me tell you that, childless as he is, he looks to you to heal this the deepest wound of his life. He wishes to see you in Rome. Afterwards, it is his will that you should go, as Caesar, to Gaul. The border tribes of the Alemanni have passed the Rhine, and made a dangerous inroad into the empire. He builds securely on the success of your campaign against the barbarians. Certain things have been revealed to him in dreams, and his last word to me at my departure was that he was assured you would succeed in establishing the empire.

JULIAN.

Establish the empire! The voice in the light, Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

Sign against sign.

LEONTES.

How, noble Caesar?

JULIAN.

I also have been forewarned of certain things; but this——

GREGORY.

Say no, Julian! 'Tis the wings of destruction they would fasten on your shoulders.

LEONTES.

Who are you, that defy the Emperor?

GREGORY.

My name is Gregory; I am the son of the Bishop of Nazianzus;—do with me what you will.

JULIAN.

He is my friend and brother; let no one touch him!

[*A great crowd has meanwhile filled the outer court.*

BASIL OF CAESAREA.

[*Making his way through the crowd.*] Take not the purple, Julian!

JULIAN.

You, too, my faithful Basil.

BASIL.

Take it not! For the Lord God's sake——

JULIAN.

What terrifies you so in this?

BASIL.

The horrors that will follow.

JULIAN.

Through me shall the empire be established.

BASIL.

Christ's empire?

JULIAN.

The Emperor's great and beautiful empire.

BASIL.

Was that the empire which shone before your eyes when, as a child, you preached the word beside the Cappadocian martyrs' graves? Was that the empire you set forth from Constantinople to establish on earth? Was that the empire——?

JULIAN.

Mists, mists;—all that lies behind me like a wild dream.

BASIL.

'Twere better you yourself should be at the bottom of the sea, with a mill-stone about your neck, than that that dream should lie behind you.—— See you not the work of the tempter? All the glory of the world is laid at your feet.

MAXIMUS.

Sign against sign, Caesar!

JULIAN.

One word, Leontes!

[*Seizing his hand and drawing him aside.*

Whither do you lead me?

LEONTES.

To Rome, my lord.

JULIAN.

That is not what I ask. Whither do you lead me: to fortune and power,—or to the shambles?

LEONTES.

Oh, my lord, so odious a suspicion——

JULIAN.

My brother's body can scarce have mouldered yet.

LEONTES.

I can silence all doubt. [*Taking out a paper.*] This letter from the Emperor, which I had thought to hand you in private——

JULIAN.

A letter? What does he write?——

[*He opens the paper and reads.*

Ah, Helena! Oh, Leontes! Helena,—Helena to me!

LEONTES.

The Emperor gives her to you, my lord! He gives you his beloved sister, for whom Gallus Caesar begged in vain.

JULIAN.

Helena to me! The unattainable attained!—But she, Leontes——?

LEONTES.

At my departure he took the Princess by the hand and led her to me. A flush of maiden blood swept over her lovely cheeks, she cast down her eyes, and said: "Greet my dear kinsman, and let him know that he has ever been the man whom——"

JULIAN.

Go on, Leontes!

LEONTES.

These words were all she spoke, the modest and pure woman.

JULIAN.

The pure woman!—How marvellously is all fulfilled!
[He calls loudly.

Robe me in the purple!

MAXIMUS.

You have chosen?

JULIAN.

Chosen, Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

Chosen, in spite of sign against sign?

JULIAN.

Here is no sign against sign. Maximus, Maximus, seer though you be, you have been blind. Robe me in the purple!

[*The* QUAESTOR LEONTES *attires him in the mantle.*

BASIL.

It is done!

MAXIMUS.

[*Murmurs to himself with upstretched hands.*] Light and victory be to him who w i l l s!

LEONTES.

And now to the Governor's palace; the people would fain greet Caesar.

JULIAN.

Caesar, in his exaltation, remains what he was,—the poor lover of wisdom, who owes all to the Emperor's grace.—To the Governor's palace, my friends!

VOICES AMONG THE QUAESTOR'S RETINUE.

Room, room for Julian Caesar!

[*All go out through the court, amid the acclamations of the crowd; only* GREGORY *and* BASIL *remain behind.*

BASIL.

Gregory? Whatever comes of this—let us hold together.

GREGORY.

Here is my hand.

ACT FOURTH

At Lutetia, in Gaul. A hall in Caesar's palace, "The Warm Baths," outside the city. Entrance door in the back; to the right, another smaller door; in front, on the left, is a window with curtains.

THE PRINCESS HELENA, *richly attired, with pearls in her hair, sits in an arm-chair, and looks out of the window. Her slave,* MYRRHA, *stands opposite her, and holds the curtain aside.*

THE PRINCESS HELENA.

What a multitude! The whole city streams out to meet them.—Hark! Myrrha,—do you not hear flutes and drums?

MYRRHA.

Yes, I think I can hear——

HELENA.

You lie! The noise is too great; you can hear nothing. [*Springing up.*] Oh, this torturing uncertainty! Not to know whether he comes as a conqueror or as a fugitive.

MYRRHA.

Fear not, my noble mistress; Caesar has always returned a conqueror.

HELENA.

Ay, hitherto; after all his lesser encounters. But this time, Myrrha! This great, fearful battle. All these conflicting rumours. If Caesar were victorious, why should he have sent that letter to the city magistrates, forbidding them to meet him with shows of honour outside the gates?

MYRRHA.

Oh, you know well, my lady, how little your noble husband cares for such things.

HELENA.

Yes, yes, that is true. And had he been defeated—they must have known it in Rome—would the Emperor have sent us this envoy who is to arrive to-day, and whose courier has brought me all these rich ornaments and gifts? Ah, Eutherius! Well? Well?

THE CHAMBERLAIN EUTHERIUS.

[*From the back.*] My Princess, it is impossible to obtain any trustworthy tidings——

HELENA.

Impossible? You are deceiving me! The soldiers themselves must surely know——

EUTHERIUS.

They are only barbarian auxiliaries who are coming in —Batavians and others—and they know nothing.

HELENA.

[*Wringing her hands.*] Oh, have I deserved this torture? Sweet, holy Christ, have I not called upon Thee day and night—— [*She listens and screams out.*
Ah, my Julian! I hear him!—Julian; my beloved!

JULIAN CAESAR.

[*In dusty armour, enters hastily by the back.*] Helena!

EUTHERIUS.

My noble Caesar!

JULIAN.

[*Vehemently embracing the Princess.*] Helena!—Bar all the doors, Eutherius!

HELENA.

Defeated! Pursued!

EUTHERIUS.

My lord!

JULIAN.

Double guards at all the doors; let no one pass! Tell me: has any emissary arrived from the Emperor?

EUTHERIUS.

No, my lord; but one is expected.

JULIAN.

Go, go! [*To the slave.*] Away with you!
[EUTHERIUS *and* MYRRHA *go out by the back.*

HELENA.

[*Sinking into the arm-chair.*] Then all is over with us?

JULIAN.

[*Drawing the curtains together.*] Who knows? If we are cautious, the storm may yet——

HELENA.

After such a defeat——?

JULIAN.

Defeat? What are you talking of, my beloved?

HELENA.

Have not the Alemanni defeated you?

JULIAN.

If they had, you would not have seen me alive.

HELENA.

[*Springing up.*] Then, Lord of Heaven, what has happened?

JULIAN.

[*Softly.*] The worst, Helena;—a stupendous victory.

HELENA.

Victory, you say! A stupendous victory? You have conquered, and yet——?

JULIAN.

You know not how I stand. You see only the gilded outside of all a Caesar's misery.

HELENA.

Julian!

JULIAN.

Can you blame me for having hidden it from you? Did not both duty and shame constrain me——? Ah, what is t h i s? What a change——!

HELENA.

What? What?

JULIAN.

How these months have changed you! Helena, you have been ill?

HELENA.

No, no; but tell me——

JULIAN.

Yes, you have been ill! You must be ill now;—your fever-flushed temples, the blue rings round your eyes——

HELENA.

Oh, 'tis nothing, my beloved! Do not look at me, Julian! 'Tis only anxiety and wakeful nights on your account; ardent prayers to the Blessed One on the cross——

JULIAN.

Spare yourself, my treasure; it is more than doubtful whether such zeal is of any avail.

HELENA.

Fie; you speak impiously.—But tell me of your own affairs, Julian! I implore you, hide nothing from me.

JULIAN.

Nothing c a n now be hidden. Since the Empress's death, I have taken no single step here in Gaul that has not been evilly interpreted at court. If I went cautiously to work with the Alemanni, I was called timorous or inert. They laughed at the philosopher, ill at ease in his coat of mail. If I gained an advantage over the barbarians, I was told that I ought to have done more.

HELENA.

But all your friends in the army——

JULIAN.

Who, think you, are my friends in the army? I have not one, my beloved Helena! Yes, one single man—the knight Sallust, of Perusia, to whom, during our marriage feast at Milan, I had to refuse a slight request. He magnanimously came to me in the camp, appealed to our old friendship in Athens, and begged leave to stand at my side in all dangers. But what does Sallust count for at the Imperial court? He is one of those whom they call heathens. He can be of no help to me.—And the others! Arbetio, the tribune, who left me in the lurch when I was blockaded by the Senones! Old Severus, burdened with the sense of his own impotence, yet unable to reconcile himself to my new strategy! Or think you I can depend on Florentius, the captain of the Praetorians? I tell you, that turbulent man is filled with the most unbridled ambitions.

HELENA.

Ah, Julian!

JULIAN.

[*Pacing up and down.*] If I could but come to the bottom of their intrigues! Every week secret letters pass between the camp and Rome. Everything I do is set down and distorted. No slave in the empire is so fettered as Caesar. Would you believe it, Helena, even my cook has to abide by a bill of fare sent to him by the Emperor; I may not alter it, either by adding or countermanding a single dish!

HELENA.

And all this you have borne in secrecy——!

JULIAN.

All know it, except you. All mock at Caesar's powerlessness. I will bear it no longer! I will not bear it!

HELENA.

But the great battle——? Tell me,—has rumour exaggerated——?

JULIAN.

Rumour could not exaggerate.—Hush; what was that? [*Listening towards the door.*] No, no; I only thought——

I may say that in these months I have done all that mortal man could do. Step by step, and in spite of all hindrances in my own camp, I drove the barbarians back towards the eastern frontier. Before Argentoratum, with

the Rhine at his back, King Knodomar gathered all his forces together. He was joined by five kings and ten lesser princes. But before he had collected the necessary boats for his retreat in case of need, I led my army to the attack.

HELENA.

My hero, my Julian!

JULIAN.

Lupicinus, with the spearmen and the light-armed troops, outflanked the enemy on the north; the old legions, under Severus, drove the barbarians more and more to the eastward, towards the river; our allies, the Batavians, under the faithful Bainabaudes, stood gallantly by the legions; and when Knodomar saw that his case was desperate, he tried to make off southwards, in order to reach the islands. But before he could escape, I sent Florentius to intercept him with the Praetorian guards and the cavalry. Helena, I dare not say it aloud, but certain it is that treachery or envy had nearly robbed me of the fruits of victory. The Roman cavalry recoiled time after time before the barbarians, who threw themselves down on the ground and stabbed the horses in the belly. Defeat stared us in the face——

HELENA.

But the God of Battles was with you!

JULIAN.

I seized a standard, fired the Imperial Guards by my shouts, made them a hasty address, which was, perhaps,

not quite unworthy of a more enlightened audience, and then, rewarded by the soldiers' acclamations, I plunged headlong into the thickest of the fight.

HELENA.

Julian! Oh, you do not love me!

JULIAN.

At that moment you were not in my thoughts. I wished to die; for I despaired of victory. But it came, my love! It seemed as though lightnings of terror flashed from our lance-points. I saw Knodomar, that redoubtable warrior—ah, you have seen him too—I saw him fleeing on foot from the battlefield, and with him his brother Vestralp, and the kings Hortar and Suomar, and all who had not fallen by our swords.

HELENA.

Oh, I can see it; I can see it! Blessed Saviour, 'twas thou that didst again send forth the destroying angels of the Milvian Bridge!

JULIAN.

Never have I heard such shrieks of despair; never seen such gaping wounds as those we trampled on, as we waded through the slain. The river did the rest; the drowning men struggled among themselves until they rolled over, and went to the bottom. Most of the princes fell living into our hands; Knodomar himself had sought refuge in a bed of reeds; one of his attendants betrayed him, and our bowmen sent a shower of arrows into his hiding-place, but without hitting him. Then, of his own accord, he gave himself up.

HELENA.

And after such a victory do you not feel secure?

JULIAN.

[*Hesitatingly.*] On the very evening of the victory an accident occurred, a trifle——

HELENA.

An accident?

JULIAN.

I prefer to call it so. In Athens we used to speculate much upon Nemesis.—My victory was so overwhelming, Helena; my position had, as it were, got out of balance; I do not know——

HELENA.

Oh, speak, speak; you put me on the rack!

JULIAN.

It was a trifle, I tell you. I ordered the captive Knodomar to be brought before me, in the presence of the army. Before the battle, he had threatened that I should be flayed alive when I fell into his hands. Now he came towards me with faltering steps, trembling in every limb. Crushed by disaster, as the barbarians are apt to be, he cast himself down before me, embraced my knees, shed tears, and begged for his life.

HELENA.

His mighty frame quivering with dread—I can see the prostrate Knodomar.—Did you kill him, my beloved?

JULIAN.

I could not kill that man. I granted him his life, and promised to send him as a prisoner to Rome.

HELENA.

Without torturing him?

JULIAN.

Prudence bade me deal mercifully with him. But then —I cannot tell how it happened—with a cry of overflowing gladness, the barbarian sprang up, stretched his pinioned hands into the air, and, half ignorant as he is of our language, shouted with a loud voice: "Praise be to thee, Julian, thou mighty Emperor!"

HELENA.

Ah!

JULIAN.

My attendants were inclined to laugh; but the barbarian's shout flew like a lightning-flash through the surrounding soldiery, kindling as it went. "Long live the Emperor Julian," those who stood nearest repeated; and the cry spread around in wider and ever wider circles to the furthest distance. 'Twas as though some Titan had hurled a mighty rock far out into the ocean;—oh, my beloved, forgive me the heathen similitude, but——

HELENA.

Emperor Julian! He said Emperor Julian!

JULIAN.

What did the rude Aleman know of Constantius, whom he had never seen? I, his conqueror, was in his eyes the greatest——

HELENA.

Yes, yes; but the soldiers——?

JULIAN.

I rebuked them sternly; for I saw at a glance how Florentius, Severus, and certain others stood silently by, white with fear and wrath.

HELENA.

Yes, yes, t h e y—but not the soldiers.

JULIAN.

Before a single night had passed my secret foes had distorted the affair. "Caesar has induced Knodomar to proclaim him Emperor," the story went, "and in requital he has granted the barbarian his life." And, thus inverted, the news has travelled to Rome.

HELENA.

Are you sure of that? And through whom?

JULIAN.

Ah, through whom? through whom? I myself wrote at once to the Emperor and told him everything, but——

HELENA.

Well—and how did he answer?

JULIAN.

As usual. You know his ominous silence when he means to strike a blow.

HELENA.

I believe you misinterpret all this. It must be so. You will see that his envoy will soon assure you of ——

JULIAN.

I am assured, Helena! Here, in my bosom, I have some intercepted letters, which——

HELENA.

Oh, Lord my God, let me see!

JULIAN.

By-and-by. [*He walks up and down.*

And all this after the services I have rendered him! I have put a stop to the inroads of the Alemanni for years to come, whilst he himself has suffered defeat after defeat on the Danube, and the army in Asia seems to make no way against the Persians. Shame and disaster on all sides, except here, where he placed a reluctant philosopher at the head of affairs. Yet none the less am I the scorn of the court. Even after the last great victory, they have lampooned me, and called me Victorinus. This must come to an end.

HELENA.

So I, too, think.

JULIAN.

On such terms, what is the title of Caesar worth?

HELENA.

No; you are right, Julian; things cannot go on thus!

JULIAN.

[*Stopping.*] Helena, could you follow me?

HELENA.

[*Softly.*] Have no fear for me; I will not fail you.

JULIAN.

Then away from all this thankless toil; away to the solitude I have sighed for so long——!

HELENA.

What do you say? Solitude!

JULIAN.

With you, my beloved; and with my dear books, that I have so seldom been able to open here, save only on my sleepless nights.

HELENA.

[*Looking him down from head to foot.*] Ah, that is what you mean!

JULIAN.

What else?

HELENA.

Ay, truly; what else?

JULIAN.

Yes, yes—I ask, what else?

HELENA.

[*Coming nearer.*] Julian—how did the barbarian king hail you?

JULIAN.

[*Shrinking.*] Helena!

HELENA.

[*Still nearer.*] What was the name that echoed through the ranks of the legions?

JULIAN.

Rash woman; there may be an eavesdropper at every door!

HELENA.

Why should you fear eavesdroppers? Is not God's grace upon you? Have you not been victorious in every encounter?—I see the Saviour calling upon you; I see the angel with the flaming sword, who cleared the way for my father when he drove Maxentius into the Tiber!

JULIAN.

Shall I rebel against the ruler of the empire?

HELENA.

Only against those who stand between you. Oh, go, go; smite them with the lightning of your wrath; put an end to this harassing, joyless life! Gaul is an outer wilderness. I am so cold here, Julian! I pine for home, for the sunshine of Rome and Greece.

JULIAN.

For home and your brother?

HELENA.

[*Softly.*] Constantius is but a wreck.

JULIAN.

Helena!

HELENA.

I can bear it no longer, I tell you. Time is flying. Eusebia is gone; her empty seat invites me to honour and greatness, while I am ageing——

JULIAN.

You are not ageing; you are young and fair!

HELENA.

No, no, no! Time speeds; I cannot bear this patiently; life slips away from me!

JULIAN.

[*Gazing at her.*] How temptingly beautiful, how divine you are!

HELENA.

[*Clinging to him.*] Am I so indeed, Julian?

JULIAN.

[*Embracing her.*] You are the only woman I have loved,—the only one who has loved me.

HELENA.

I am older than you. I will not age still more. When all is over, then——

JULIAN.

[*Tearing himself away.*] Hush! I will hear no more.

HELENA.

[*Following him.*] Constantius is dying by inches; he hangs by a hair over the grave. Oh, my beloved Julian, you have the soldiers on your side——

JULIAN.

No more, no more!

HELENA.

He can bear no agitation. What is there, then, to recoil from? I mean nothing bloody. Fie, how can you think so? The terror will be enough; it will fold him in its embrace and gently end his sufferings.

JULIAN.

Do you forget the invisible bodyguard around the Lord's anointed?

HELENA.

Christ is good. Oh, be pious, Julian, and He will forgive much. I will help. Prayers shall go up for you. Praised be the saints! Praised be the martyrs! Trust me, we will atone for everything later. Give me the Alemanni to convert; I will send out priests among them; they shall bow under the mercy of the cross.

JULIAN.

The Alemanni will not bow.

HELENA.

Then they shall die! Like sweet incense shall their blood rise up to Him, the Blessed One. We will magnify His glory; His praise shall be made manifest in us. I myself will do my part. The women of the Alemanni shall be my care. If they will not bow, they shall be sacrificed! And then, my Julian—when next you see me——; young, young once more! Give me the women of the Alemanni, my beloved! Blood—'twould be no murder, and the remedy is a sovereign one—a bath of young virgins' blood——

JULIAN.

Helena, the thought is crime!

HELENA

Is it crime to commit crime for your sake?

JULIAN.

You beautiful, you peerless one!

HELENA.

[*Bowing herself down over his hands.*] My lord before God and men!—Draw not back this time, Julian! My hero, my Emperor! I see Heaven open. Priests shall sing praises to Christ; my women shall assemble in prayer. [*With upraised arms.*] Oh, thou Blessed One! Oh, thou God of Hosts,—thou, in whose hand lie grace and victory——

JULIAN.

[*With a look towards the door, exclaims:*] Helena!

HELENA.

Ah!

THE CHAMBERLAIN EUTHERIUS.

[*From the back.*] My lord, the Emperor's emissary——

JULIAN.

Is he come?

EUTHERIUS.

Yes, my lord!

JULIAN.

His name? Who is he?

EUTHERIUS.

The tribune Decentius.

JULIAN.

Indeed? The pious Decentius!

JULIAN.

Has he talked with any one?

EUTHERIUS.

With no one, my lord; he has this moment arrived.

JULIAN.

I will see him at once. And listen; one thing more. Summon the captains and officers to me here.

EUTHERIUS.

It is well, most gracious lord.

[*He goes out by the back.*

JULIAN.

Now, my Helena, now we shall see——

HELENA.

[*Softly.*] Whatever happens, forget not that you can trust in the soldiers.

JULIAN.

Ah, trust, trust——; I am not sure that I can trust in any one.

The TRIBUNE DECENTIUS *enters from the back.*

HELENA.

[*Meeting him.*] Welcome, noble Decentius! A Roman face,—and, above all, this face,—oh! it sheds genial sunlight over our inclement Gaul.

DECENTIUS.

The Emperor meets your longing and your hope halfway, noble Princess! We may hope that Gaul will not much longer hold you in its chains.

HELENA.

Say you so, messenger of gladness? So the Emperor still thinks lovingly of me? How is it with his health?

JULIAN.

Go, go, my beloved Helena!

DECENTIUS.

The Emperor's health is certainly no worse.

HELENA.

No, surely not? I thought as much. All those alarming rumours——; God be praised that they were but rumours! Thank him most lovingly, good Decentius! And let me thank you too. What splendid gifts have heralded your coming! Imperial——no, let me say brotherly gifts indeed! Two shining black Nubians,—you should see them, my Julian!—and pearls! See, I am wearing them already. And fruits,—sweet, luscious fruits! Ah, peaches from Damascus, peaches in chalices of gold! How they will refresh me!—fruit, fruit; I am pining away here in Gaul.

JULIAN.

A feast shall end the day; but business first. Go, my precious wife!

HELENA.

I go to the church,—to pray for my brother and for all good hopes. [*She goes out to the right.*

JULIAN.

[*After an instant's pause.*] A message, or letters?

DECENTIUS.

Letters. [*He hands him a roll of paper.*

JULIAN.

[*Reads, represses a smile, and holds out his hand.*] More!

DECENTIUS.

Noble Caesar, that is well-nigh all.

JULIAN.

Truly? Has the Emperor sent his friend all this long way only to——?

[*He bursts into a short laugh, and then walks up and down.*

Had Knodomar, the King of the Alemanni, arrived in Rome ere you left?

DECENTIUS.

Yes, noble Caesar!

JULIAN.

And how fares he in the strange land, ignorant as he is of our tongue! For he knows naught of it, Decentius! He was positively a laughing-stock to my soldiers. Only think, he mixed up two such common words as Emperor and Caesar.

DECENTIUS.

[*Shrugging his shoulders.*] A barbarian. What can one expect?

JULIAN.

No, what can one expect? But the Emperor has received him graciously?

DECENTIUS.

Knodomar is dead, my lord!

JULIAN.

[*Stopping suddenly.*] Knodomar dead!

DECENTIUS.

Dead, in the foreigners' quarters, on the Coelian hill.

JULIAN.

Dead? Indeed!—Ah, the Roman air is unwholesome.

DECENTIUS.

The King of the Alemanni died of home-sickness, my lord! The longing for kindred and freedom——

JULIAN.

——wastes a man away, Decentius; yes, yes, I know that.—I should not have sent him living to Rome. I should have had him killed here.

DECENTIUS.

Caesar's heart is merciful.

JULIAN.

H'm——! Home-sickness? Indeed!

To the Master of the Horse, SINTULA, *who enters by the back.*

Are you there, old faun? Tempt me no more. [*To* DECENTIUS.] Since the battle at Argentoratum, he is for ever talking to me of the triumphal chariot and the white horses. [*To* SINTULA.] 'Twould be like Phaeton's career with the Lybian sun-horses. How did that end? Have you forgotten—have you forgotten your heathendom, I had almost said?—Pardon me, Decentius, for wounding your pious ear.

DECENTIUS.

Caesar delights his servant's ear; he cannot wound it.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes; bear with Caesar's jesting. In truth I know not how else to take the matter.—Here they are.

SEVERUS *and* FLORENTIUS, *together with other captains and gentlemen of Caesar's court, enter from the back.*

JULIAN.

[*Advancing to receive them.*] Greeting to you, brothers in arms and friends. Blame me not overmuch for summoning you hither, straight from the dust and toil of the march; truly, I should not have grudged you some hours' rest; but——

FLORENTIUS.

Has aught of moment happened, my lord?

JULIAN.

Aye, truly. Can you tell me—what was lacking to complete Caesar's happiness?

FLORENTIUS.

What should be lacking to complete Caesar's happiness?

JULIAN.

N o w, nothing. [*To* DECENTIUS.] The army has demanded that I should enter the city in triumph. They would have had me pass through the gates of Lutetia at

the head of the legions. Captive barbarian princes, with pinioned hands, were to march beside my chariot-wheels; women and slaves from twenty conquered peoples were to follow, crowded closely together, head against head—— [*Breaking off suddenly.*] Rejoice, my valiant fellow soldiers; here you see the Tribune Decentius, the Emperor's trusted friend and councillor. He has arrived this morning with gifts and greetings from Rome.

FLORENTIUS.

Ah, then indeed naught can be lacking to complete Caesar's happiness.

SEVERUS.

[*Softly to* FLORENTIUS.] Incomprehensible! Then he is in the Emperor's grace again!

FLORENTIUS.

[*Softly.*] Oh, this unstable Emperor!

JULIAN.

You seem all to be struck dumb with astonishment.— They think the Emperor has done too much, good Decentius!

FLORENTIUS.

How can Caesar think such a thought?

SEVERUS.

Too much, noble Caesar? By no means. Who doubts that the Emperor knows how to set due bounds to his favour?

FLORENTIUS.

This is in truth a rare and remarkable distinction——

SEVERUS.

I should even call it beyond measure rare and remarkable——

FLORENTIUS.

And especially does it afford a striking proof that our august Emperor's mind is free from all jealousy——

SEVERUS.

An unexampled proof, I venture to call it.

FLORENTIUS.

But then, what has not Caesar achieved in these few years in Gaul?

JULIAN.

A year-long dream, dear friends! I have achieved nothing. Nothing, nothing!

FLORENTIUS.

All this your modesty counts as nothing? What was the army when you took command? A disorderly rabble——

SEVERUS.

——without coherence, without discipline, without direction——

JULIAN.

You exaggerate, Severus!

FLORENTIUS.

And was it not with this undisciplined rabble that you took the field against the Alemanni? Did you not win battle after battle with these levies, till your victories transformed them into an invincible host? Did you not retake Colonia Agrippina——?

JULIAN.

Come, come, you see with the eye of friendship, my Florentius!—Or is it really so? Is it a fact, that I drove the barbarians out of the islands of the Rhine! That I placed the ruined Tres Tabernae in a posture of defence, making it a bulwark of the empire? Is it really so?

FLORENTIUS.

What, my lord! Can you be in doubt as to so great deeds?

JULIAN.

No, I cannot but think—— And the battle of Argentoratum? Was I not there? I cannot but fancy that I defeated Knodomar. And after the victory——; Florentius, have I dreamt it, or did I rebuild Trajan's fortress, when we marched into German territory?

FLORENTIUS.

Noble Caesar, is there any man so mad as to deny you the honour of these exploits?

SEVERUS.

[*To* DECENTIUS.] I praise the destiny that has vouchsafed to my old age so victorious a leader.

FLORENTIUS.

[*Also to the Tribune.*] I dare scarcely think what turn this inroad of the Alemanni might have taken, but for Caesar's courage and conduct.

MANY COURTIERS.

[*Pressing forward.*] Yes, yes; Caesar is great!

OTHERS.

[*Clapping their hands.*] Caesar is peerless!

JULIAN.

[*Looks for a time alternately at* DECENTIUS *and the others; thereupon breaks out into a loud, short laugh.*] So blind is friendship, Decentius! So blind, so blind!

[*He turns to the rest, and taps the roll of paper in his hand.*

Here I read far other tidings! Listen and drink in the refreshing dew of knowledge. This is the Emperor's despatch to all the proconsuls of the empire;—our excellent Decentius has brought me a copy of it. Here we learn that I have accomplished nothing in Gaul. It was, as I told you, a dream. Here we have the Emperor's own words: it was under the Emperor's happy auspices that the imminent danger to the empire was averted.

FLORENTIUS.

All the affairs of the empire flourish under the Emperor's auspices.

JULIAN.

More, more! It is here set forth that it was the Emperor who fought and conquered on the Rhine; it was

the Emperor who raised up the King of the Alemanni, as he lay grovelling before him. My name is not fortunate enough to find any place in this document,—nor yours, Florentius, nor yours, Severus! And here, in the description of the battle of Argentoratum—where was it? Yes; here it stands!—it was the Emperor who determined the order of battle; it was the Emperor himself who, at peril of his life, fought till his sword was blunted, in the forefront of the battle: it was the Emperor who, by the terror of his presence, put the barbarians to headlong flight——; read, read, I tell you!

SEVERUS.

Noble Caesar, your word suffices.

JULIAN.

What mean you, then, by your deluding speeches, my friends? Would you, in your too great love for me, make me a parasite, to be fed with the leavings you have pilfered from my kinsman's table?—What think you, Decentius? What say you to this? You see, in my own camp, I have to keep an eye on adherents who, in their blind zeal, are sometimes in danger of straying over the border-line of revolt.

FLORENTIUS.

[*Hastily, to the Tribune.*] I assure you, my words have been sadly misconstrued if——

SEVERUS.

[*Also to the Tribune.*] It could never enter my mind to——

JULIAN.

That is right, my brothers in arms; let us all agree to swallow our vainglory. I asked what was lacking to complete Caesar's happiness. Now you know it. 'Twas the recognition of the truth that was lacking in Caesar's happiness. Your silver helmet will never be dimmed with the dust of the triumph, Florentius! The Emperor has already triumphed for us, in Rome. He therefore declares all festivities here to be superfluous. Go, Sintula, and see that the intended procession is countermanded. The Emperor wishes to give his soldiers a much-needed rest. 'Tis his will that they remain in the camp outside the walls.

[*The Master of the Horse*, SINTULA, *goes out by the back.*

JULIAN.

Was I not once a philosopher? They said so, at least, both in Athens and Ephesus. So weak is human nature in the hours of success; I had almost been false to philosophy. The Emperor has brought me to my senses. Thank him most humbly, Decentius. Have you more to say?

DECENTIUS.

One thing more. From all the Emperor has learnt, and especially from the letter you wrote him from Argentoratum, it appears that the great work of pacification in Gaul is happily accomplished.

JULIAN.

Most certainly; the Emperor, partly by his valour, partly by his magnanimous clemency——

DECENTIUS.

The Rhine frontier of the empire has been placed in security.

JULIAN.

By the Emperor, by the Emperor.

DECENTIUS.

In the Danubian provinces, on the contrary, affairs are going ill; and still worse in Asia—King Sapor makes constant progress.

JULIAN.

What audacity! Rumour has it that not even in this summer's campaign has the Emperor been pleased to let his generals crush him.

DECENTIUS.

The Emperor intends to do so himself in the spring. [*Producing a roll of papers.*] Here he makes known his will, noble Caesar.

JULIAN.

Let us see, let us see! [*Reading.*] Ah!

[*He reads again for a long time, with signs of deep inward emotion; then he looks up and says:*

Then, 'tis the Emperor's will that——? Good, good, noble Decentius; the Emperor's will shall be done.

DECENTIUS.

It must be done, this very day.

JULIAN.

This very day; of course. Come hither, Sintula! Where is he?—Ah, I remember!—Call Sintula back!

[*A courtier goes out by the back;* JULIAN *retires to the window, and reads the papers through once more.*

FLORENTIUS.

[*In a low voice, to the Tribune.*] I implore you not to misinterpret what I said. When I gave Caesar the credit, of course I did not mean to——

SEVERUS.

[*In a low voice.*] It could never occur to me to doubt that it was the Emperor's supreme and wise direction that——

A COURTIER.

[*On the other side of the Tribune.*] I beg you, noble sir,—put in a word for me at court, and release me from this painful position in the household of a Caesar who——; well, he is the Emperor's exalted kinsman, but——

ANOTHER COURTIER.

I could tell you, alas, of things that indicate not only boundless vanity, but overweening ambition——!

JULIAN.

This very day! Let me say one word, Decentius! It has long been my dearest wish to lay down this burden of responsibility.

DECENTIUS.

It shall be conveyed to the Emperor.

JULIAN.

I call Heaven to witness that I never——; Ah, here is Sintula; now we can—— [*To the Tribune.*] You are going?

DECENTIUS.

I have affairs to transact with the generals, noble Caesar!

JULIAN.

Without my intervention?

DECENTIUS.

The Emperor commands me to spare his beloved kinsman.

[*He goes out by the back, followed by the others, except* SINTULA, *who remains standing at the door.*

JULIAN.

[*Looking at him awhile.*] Sintula!

SINTULA.

Yes, noble master!

JULIAN.

Come nearer—Yes, by my faith, you look honest. Pardon me; I never thought you could be so attached to me.

SINTULA.

How know you that I am attached to you, my lord?

JULIAN.

[*Pointing to the roll of paper.*] I can read it here, in this; it is written that you are to desert me.

SINTULA.

I, my lord?

JULIAN.

The Emperor disbands the army of Gaul, Sintula!

SINTULA.

Disbands——?

JULIAN.

Yes, what is it but a disbanding? The Emperor needs reinforcements, both on the Danube, and against the Persians. Our Batavian and Herulian auxiliaries are to depart with all speed, in order to reach Asia in the spring.

SINTULA.

But the thing is impossible, my lord. You have solemnly sworn to these very allies that they shall in no case be called upon to serve beyond the Alps.

JULIAN.

Just so, Sintula! The Emperor writes that I gave that promise over hastily, and without his consent. This is

quite a new light to me; but here it stands. I am to be forced to break my word, dishonour myself in the eyes of the army, turn against me the unbridled rage of the barbarians, perhaps their murderous weapons.

SINTULA.

They cannot hurt you, my lord! The Roman legions will make their breasts your shield.

JULIAN.

The Roman legions. H'm;—my simple-minded friend! From every Roman legion three hundred men are to be drafted off, and are likewise to join the Emperor by the shortest route.

SINTULA.

Ah! This is——?

JULIAN.

Well planned, is it not? Every branch of the army is to be set against me, that I may the more easily be disarmed.

SINTULA.

And I tell you, my lord, that not one of your generals will lend himself to such a design.

JULIAN.

My generals are not to be led into temptation. You are the man.

SINTULA.

I, my Caesar!

JULIAN.

Here it is written. The Emperor commissions you to take all necessary measures, and then to lead the chosen detachments to Rome.

SINTULA.

This task assigned to me? With men here like Florentius and old Severus——

JULIAN.

You have no victories to your discredit, Sintula!

SINTULA.

No, that is true. I have never been allowed an opportunity of showing——

JULIAN.

I have been unjust to you. Thanks for your fidelity.

SINTULA.

So great an imperial honour! My lord, may I see——

JULIAN.

What would you see? You surely would not lend yourself to such a design.

SINTULA.

God forbid that I should disobey the Emperor!

JULIAN.

Sintula,—would you disarm your Caesar?

SINTULA.

Caesar has ever undervalued me. Caesar has never forgiven me the fact of his having to endure about his person a Master of the Horse chosen by the Emperor.

JULIAN.

The Emperor is great and wise; he chooses well.

SINTULA.

My lord,—I long to set about my duty; may I beg to see the Emperor's commission?

JULIAN.

[*Handing him one of the papers.*] Here is the Emperor's commission. Go, and do your duty.

MYRRHA.

[*Entering hastily from the right.*] Oh merciful Redeemer!

JULIAN.

Myrrha! What is the matter?

MYRRHA.

Oh kind Heaven, my mistress——

JULIAN.

Your mistress,—what of her?

MYRRHA.

Sickness or frenzy——; help, help!

JULIAN.

Helena sick! The physician! Oribases must come, Sintula! Summon him!

[SINTULA *goes out by the back.* JULIAN *is hastening out to the right, when at the door he meets the* PRINCESS HELENA, *surrounded by female slaves. Her countenance is wild and distorted, her hair and clothes are in disorder.*

HELENA.

Loosen the comb! Loosen the comb, I say! It is red hot. My hair is on fire; I burn, I burn!

JULIAN.

Helena! For God's pity's sake——!

HELENA.

Will no one help me? They are killing me with needle-pricks!

JULIAN.

My Helena! What has befallen you?

HELENA.

Myrrha, Myrrha! Save me from the women, Myrrha!

THE PHYSICIAN ORIBASES.

[*Entering from the back.*] What horror do I hear——? Is it true? Ah!

JULIAN.

Helena! My love, light of my life——!

HELENA.

Away from me! Oh sweet Jesus, help!
[*She half swoons among the slave-girls.*

JULIAN.

She is raving. What can it be, Oribases?—See—see her eyes, how large——!

ORIBASES.

[*To* MYRRHA.] What has the Princess taken? What has she been eating or drinking?

JULIAN.

Ah, you think——?

ORIBASES.

Answer, women; what have you given the Princess?

MYRRHA.

We? Oh, nothing, I swear; she herself——

ORIBASES.

Well? Well?

MYRRHA.

Some fruits; they were peaches, I think;—oh, I know not——

JULIAN.

Fruits. Peaches? Some of those which——?

MYRRHA.

Yes—no—yes; I do not know, my lord; it was two Nubians——

JULIAN.

Help, help, Oribases!

ORIBASES.

Alas, I fear——

JULIAN.

No, no, no!

ORIBASES.

Hush, gracious lord; she is coming to herself.

HELENA.

[*Whispering.*] Why did the sun go down? Oh holy mysterious darkness!

JULIAN.

Helena! Listen; collect your thoughts——

ORIBASES.

My noble Princess——

JULIAN.

It is the physician, Helena! [*He takes her hand.*] No, here, where I stand.

HELENA.

[*Tearing her hand away.*] Faugh! there he was again!

JULIAN.

She does not see me. Here, here, Helena!

HELENA.

The loathsome creature;—he is always about me.

JULIAN.

What does she mean?

ORIBASES.

Stand apart, gracious lord——!

HELENA.

Sweet stillness! He does not dream——; oh my Gallus!

JULIAN.

Gallus!

ORIBASES.

Go, noble Caesar; it is not meet——!

HELENA.

How boldly your close-curling hair curves over your neck! Oh, that short, thick neck——

JULIAN.

Abyss of all abysses——!

ORIBASES.

The delirium is increasing——

JULIAN.

I see, I see. We must take note, Oribases!

HELENA.

[*Laughing softly.*] Now he would be taking notes again.—Ink on his fingers; book-dust in his hair—unwashed; faugh, faugh, how he stinks!

MYRRHA.

My lord, shall I not——?

JULIAN.

Away with you, woman!

HELENA.

How could you let yourself be conquered by him, you great-limbed, bronzed barbarian? He cannot conquer women. How I loathe this impotent virtue!

JULIAN.

Stand apart, all of you! Not so near, Oribases! I myself will watch the Princess.

HELENA.

Art thou wroth with me, thou glorious one? Gallus is dead. Beheaded. What a blow that must have been! Be not jealous, oh my first and last? Burn Gallus in hell fire;—it was none but thou, thou, thou——!

JULIAN.

No nearer, Oribases!

HELENA.

Kill the priest, too! I will not see him after this. Thou knowest our sweet secret. Oh thou, my days' de-

sire, my nights' delight! It was thou thyself—in the form of thy servant—in the oratory; yes, yes, thou wast there; it was thou—in the darkness, in the heavy air, in the shrouding incense-clouds, that night, when the Caesar growing beneath my heart——

JULIAN.

[*Recoiling with a cry.*] Ah!

HELENA.

[*With outstretched arms.*] My lover and my lord! Mine, mine——!

[*She falls swooning on the floor; the slave-girls hasten forward and crowd round her.*

JULIAN.

[*Stands for a moment immovable; then shakes his clenched fist in the air, and cries:*] Galilean!

[*The slave-girls carry the Princess out on the right; at the same moment the Knight* SALLUST *comes hastily in by the door in the back.*

SALLUST.

The Princess in a swoon! Oh, then it is true!

JULIAN.

[*Grasps the Physician by the arm, and leads him aside.*] Tell me the truth. Did you know before to-day that——; you understand me; have you known aught of——the Princess's condition?

ORIBASES.

I, like every one else, my lord!

JULIAN.

And you said naught to me, Oribases!

ORIBASES.

Of what, my Caesar?

JULIAN.

How dared you conceal it from me?

ORIBASES.

My lord, there was one thing we none of us knew.

JULIAN.

And that was?

ORIBASES.

That Caesar knew nothing. [*He is going*

JULIAN.

Where are you going?

ORIBASES.

To try the remedies my art prescribes——

JULIAN.

I believe your art will prove powerless.

ORIBASES.

My lord, it is yet possible that——

JULIAN.

Powerless, I tell you!

ORIBASES.

[*Retiring a step.*] Noble Caesar, it is my duty to disobey you in this.

JULIAN.

What think you I mean? Go, go; try what your art——; save the Emperor's sister; the Emperor will be inconsolable if his thoughtful affection should bring any disaster in its train. Of course you know that those fruits were a gift from the Emperor?

ORIBASES.

Ah!

JULIAN.

Go, go, man,—try what your art——

ORIBASES.

[*Bowing reverently.*] I believe my art will prove powerless, my lord! [*He goes out to the right.*

JULIAN.

Ah, is it you, Sallust? What think you? The waves of fate are once more beginning to sweep over my race.

SALLUST.

Oh, but rescue is at hand. Oribases will——

JULIAN.

[*Shortly and decisively.*] The Princess will die.

SALLUST.

Oh, if I dared speak! If I dared trace out the secret threads in this web of destruction!

JULIAN.

Be of good cheer, friend; all the threads shall be brought to light, and then——

DECENTIUS.

[*Entering from the back.*] How shall I look Caesar in the face! How inscrutable are the ways of God! Crushed to earth——; oh that you could but read my heart! That I should be the harbinger of sorrow and disaster——!

JULIAN.

Yes, that you may say twice over, noble Decentius! And how shall I find soft and specious enough terms to bring this in any endurable guise to the ears of her imperial brother!

DECENTIUS.

Alas that such a thing should happen so close upon the coming of my mission! And just at this moment! Oh, what a thunderbolt from a cloudless sky of hope!

JULIAN.

Oh, this towering and devouring tempest, just as the ship seemed running into the long-desired haven! Oh, this—this——! Sorrow makes us eloquent, Decentius,—you as well as me. But first to business. The two Nubians must be seized and examined.

DECENTIUS.

The Nubians, my lord? Could you dream that my indignant zeal would for another instant suffer the two negligent servants to——?

JULIAN.

What! Surely you have not already——?

DECENTIUS.

Call me hasty, if you will, noble Caesar. But my love to the Emperor and to his sorrow-stricken house would in truth be less than it is if, in such an hour, I were capable of calm reflection.

JULIAN.

Have you killed both the slaves?

DECENTIUS.

Had not their negligence deserved a sevenfold death? They were two heathen savages, my lord! Their testimony would have been worthless; it was impossible to wring anything out of them, save that they had left their precious charge standing for some time unwatched in the antechamber, accessible to every one——

JULIAN.

Aha! Had they indeed, Decentius?

DECENTIUS.

I accuse no one. But oh, beloved Caesar, I bid you beware; for you are surrounded by faithless servants. Your court—by an unhappy misunderstanding!—fancies

that some sort of disfavour—or what should I call it?—is implied in the measures which the Emperor has found it necessary to adopt; in short——

SINTULA.

[*Entering from the back.*] My lord, you have imposed on me a charge I can in no way fulfil.

JULIAN.

The Emperor imposed it, good Sintula!

SINTULA.

Relieve me of it, my lord; it is utterly beyond me.

DECENTIUS.

What has happened?

SINTULA.

The camp is in wild revolt. The legions and the allies are banding together——

DECENTIUS.

Rebelling against the Emperor's will!

SINTULA.

The soldiers are shouting that they appeal to Caesar's promises.

JULIAN.

Hark! hark! that roar outside——!

SINTULA.

The rioters are rushing hither——

DECENTIUS.

Let no one enter!

SALLUST.

[*At the window.*] Too late; the whole courtyard is filled with angry soldiers.

DECENTIUS.

Caesar's precious life is in danger. Where is Florentius?

SINTULA.

Fled.

DECENTIUS.

The blustering coward! And Severus?

SINTULA.

Severus feigns sickness; he has driven out to his farm.

JULIAN.

I myself will speak to the madmen.

DECENTIUS.

Not a step, noble Caesar!

JULIAN.

What now?

DECENTIUS.

'Tis my duty, gracious lord; the Emperor's command—; his beloved kinsman's life—; Caesar is my prisoner.

SALLUST.

Ah!

JULIAN.

So it has come at last!

DECENTIUS.

The household guard, Sintula! You must conduct Caesar in safety to Rome.

JULIAN.

To Rome!

SINTULA.

What say you, my lord?

DECENTIUS.

To Rome, I say!

JULIAN.

Like Gallus! [*He shouts through the window.*] Help, help!

SALLUST.

Fly, my Caesar! Fly, fly!

Wild cries are heard without. Soldiers of the Roman legions, Batavian auxiliaries, and other allies, climb in through the window. At the same time, others swarm in by the door at the back. Amongst the foremost is the Standard-Bearer MAURUS; *women, some with children in their arms, follow the intruders.*

CRIES AMONG THE SOLDIERS.

Caesar, Caesar!

OTHER VOICES.

Caesar, why have you betrayed us?

AGAIN OTHERS.

Down with the faithless Caesar.

JULIAN.

[*Casts himself with outstretched arms into the midst of the soldiers, crying:*] Fellow-soldiers, brothers in arms,—save me from my enemies!

DECENTIUS.

Ah, what is this——?

WILD CRIES.

Down with Caesar! Strike him down!

JULIAN.

Close round me in a circle; draw your swords!

MAURUS.

They are drawn already!

WOMEN.

Strike him, cut him down!

JULIAN.

I thank you for coming! Maurus! Honest Maurus! Yes, yes; you I can trust.

A BATAVIAN SOLDIER.

How dare you send us to the ends of the earth? Was t h a t what you swore to us?

OTHER ALLIES.

Not over the Alps! We are not bound to go!

JULIAN.

Not to Rome! I will not go; they would murder me, as they murdered my brother Gallus!

MAURUS.

What say you, my lord?

DECENTIUS.

Do not believe him!

JULIAN.

Lay no finger on the noble Decentius; the fault is not his.

LAIPSO.

[*A Subaltern.*] That is true; the fault is Caesar's.

JULIAN.

Ah, is that you, Laipso! My gallant friend, is that you? You fought well at Argentoratum.

LAIPSO.

Caesar has not forgotten that?

VARRO.

[*A Subaltern.*] But he forgets his promises!

JULIAN.

Was not that the voice of the undaunted Varro? Ah, there he is! Your wound is healed, I see. Oh, well-deserving soldier,—why would they not let me make you captain?

VARRO.

Was it indeed your wish?

JULIAN.

Blame not the Emperor for refusing my request. The Emperor knows none of you as I know you.

DECENTIUS.

Soldiers, hear me——!

MANY VOICES.

We have nothing to do with the Emperor!

OTHERS.

[*Pressing forward menacingly.*] It is Caesar we call to account!

JULIAN.

What power has your hapless Caesar, my friends? They would take me to Rome. They deny even the control of my private affairs. They seize upon my share of the spoils of war. I thought to give every soldier five gold pieces and a pound of silver, but——

THE SOLDIERS.

What does he say?

JULIAN.

'Tis not the Emperor who forbids it, but bad and envious councillors. The Emperor is good, my dear friends! But oh the Emperor is sick; he can do nothing——

MANY SOLDIERS.

Five gold pieces and a pound of silver!

OTHER SOLDIERS.

And that they deny us!

OTHERS AGAIN.

Who dares deny Caesar anything?

MAURUS.

Is it thus they treat Caesar, the soldiers' father?

LAIPSO.

Caesar, who has been rather our friend than our master? Is it not true?

MANY VOICES.

Yes, yes. it is!

VARRO.

Should not Caesar, the victorious general, be suffered to choose his captains as he pleases?

MAURUS.

Should he not have free control over the spoils that fall to his share?

LOUD SHOUTS.

Yes, yes, yes!

JULIAN.

Alas, what would it profit you? What need you care for worldly goods, you, who are to be led forth to the most distant lands, to meet a doubtful fate——?

SOLDIERS.

We will not go!

JULIAN.

Look not at me; I am ashamed; I can scarce help weeping when I think that, within a few months, you will be a prey to pestilence, famine, and the weapons of a bloodthirsty foe.

MANY SOLDIERS.

[*Pressing round him.*] Caesar! Kind Caesar!

JULIAN.

And your defenceless wives and children, whom you must leave behind in your scattered homes! Who shall protect them in their pitiable plight, soon to be widowed and fatherless, and exposed to the vengeful onslaughts of the Alemanni?

THE WOMEN.

[*Weeping.*] Caesar, Caesar, protect us!

JULIAN.

[*Weeping likewise.*] What is Caesar? What can the fallen Caesar do?

LAIPSO.

Write to the Emperor, and let him know——

JULIAN.

Ah, what is the Emperor? The Emperor is sick in mind and body; he is broken down by his care for the empire's weal. Is it not so, Decentius?

DECENTIUS.

Yes, doubtless; but——

JULIAN.

How it cut me to the heart when I heard——

[*Pressing the hands of those around him.*

Pray for his soul, you who worship the good Christ! Offer sacrifices for his recovery, you who have remained faithful to the gods of your fathers!—— Know you that the Emperor has held a triumphal entry into Rome?

MAURUS.

The Emperor!

VARRO.

What? As he returned, beaten, from the Danube?

JULIAN.

As he returned, from the Danube, he held a triumph for our victories——

DECENTIUS.

[*Threateningly.*] Noble Caesar, reflect——!

JULIAN.

Yes, the Tribune says well; reflect how our Emperor's mind must be clouded, when he can do such things! Oh, my sorely afflicted kinsman! When he rode into Rome through the mighty arch of Constantine, he fancied himself so tall that he bent his back and bowed his head down to his saddle-bow.

MAURUS.

Like a cock in a doorway.

[*Laughter among the soldiers.*

SOME VOICES.

Is t h a t an Emperor?

VARRO.

Shall we obey h i m?

LAIPSO.

Away with him!

MAURUS.

Caesar, do you take the helm!

DECENTIUS.

Rebellion——!

MANY VOICES.

Seize the throne; seize the throne, Caesar!

JULIAN.

Madmen! Is this language for Romans? Would you imitate the barbarous Alemanni? What was it Knodomar cried at Argentoratum? Answer me, good Maurus,—what did he cry out?

MAURUS.

He cried, "Long live the Emperor Julian!"

JULIAN.

Ah, hush, hush! What are you saying?

MAURUS.

Long live the Emperor Julian!

THOSE BEHIND.

What is afoot?

VARRO.

They are proclaiming Julian Emperor!

LOUD CRIES.

Long live the Emperor! Long live the Emperor Julian!

[*The cry spreads in wider and wider circles without; all talk together;* JULIAN *cannot make himself heard for some time.*

JULIAN.

Oh, I entreat you——! Soldiers, friends, brothers in arms,—see, I stretch out my trembling arms to you——!

Be not alarmed, my Decentius!—Oh that I should live to see this! I do not blame you, my faithful friends; it is despair that has driven you to this. You will have it? Good; I submit to the will of the army.—Sintula, call the generals together.—You, Tribune, can bear witness to Constantius that 'twas only on compulsion that I—— [*He turns to* VARRO.] Go, captain, and make known throughout the camp this unlooked-for turn of events. I will write without delay to Rome——

SALLUST.

My lord, the soldiers clamour to see you.

MAURUS.

A circlet of gold on your head, Emperor!

JULIAN.

I have never possessed such a gaud.

MAURUS.

This will serve.

[*He takes off his gold chain, and winds it several times round Caesar's brow.*

SHOUTS OUTSIDE.

The Emperor, the Emperor! We will see the Emperor!

SOLDIERS.

On the shield with him! Up, up!

[*The bystanders raise* JULIAN *aloft on a shield, and show him to the multitude, amid long-continued acclamations.*

JULIAN.

The will of the army be done! I bow before the inevitable, and renew all my promises——

LEGIONARIES.

Five gold pieces and a pound of silver!

BATAVIANS.

Not over the Alps!

JULIAN.

We will occupy Vienna. 'Tis the strongest city in Gaul, and well supplied with provisions of every sort. There I intend to wait until we see whether my afflicted kinsman sanctions what we have here determined, for the empire's weal——

SALLUST.

That he will never do, my lord!

JULIAN.

[*With upstretched hands.*] Divine wisdom enlighten his darkened soul, and guide him for the best! Be thou with me, Fortune, who hast never yet deserted me!

MYRRHA AND THE WOMEN.

[*Lamenting outside on the right.*] Dead, dead, dead!

ACT FIFTH

At Vienna [in Gaul]. A vaulted space in the catacombs. To the left a winding passage running upwards. In the background, a flight of steps is hewn in the rock, leading up to a closed door. In front, to the right, a number of steps lead down to the lower passages. The space is feebly lighted by a hanging-lamp.

JULIAN CAESAR, *unshaven, and in dirty clothes, stands bending over the opening to the right. A subdued sound of psalm-singing comes through the door from the church beyond it, built on to the catacomb.*

JULIAN.

[*Speaking downwards.*] Still no sign?

A VOICE.

[*Far below.*] None.

JULIAN.

Neither yes nor no? Neither for nor against?

THE VOICE.

Both.

JULIAN.

That is the same as nothing.

THE VOICE.

Wait, wait.

JULIAN.

I have waited five days; you asked for only three. I tell you——I have no mind to—— [*He listens towards the entrance, and calls down.*] Do not speak!

SALLUST.

[*Entering by the passage on the left.*] My lord, my lord!

JULIAN.

Is it you, Sallust? What would you down here?

SALLUST.

This thick darkness——; ah! now I see you.

JULIAN.

What do you want?

SALLUST.

To serve you, if I can,—to lead you out to the living again.

JULIAN.

What news from the world above?

SALLUST.

The soldiers are restless; there are signs on all hands that their patience will soon be exhausted.

JULIAN.

Is the sun shining up there?

SALLUST.

Yes, my lord.

JULIAN.

The vault of heaven is like a sea of glittering light. Perhaps it is high noon. It is warm; the air quivers along the walls of the houses; the river, half-shrunken in its bed, ripples over the white flints.—Beautiful life! Beautiful earth!

SALLUST.

Oh come, my lord, come! This stay in the catacombs is construed to your hurt.

JULIAN.

How is it construed?

SALLUST.

Dare I tell you?

JULIAN.

You dare, and you must. How is it construed?

SALLUST.

Many believe that it is remorse rather than sorrow that has driven you underground in this strange fashion.

JULIAN.

They think I killed her?

SALLUST.

The mystery of the case may excuse them, if——

JULIAN.

No one killed her, Sallust! She was too pure for this sinful world; therefore an angel from heaven descended every night into her secret chamber, and called upon her. You doubt it? Know you not that this is how the priests in Lutetia accounted for her death? And the priests ought to know. Has not the transport of her body hither been like a triumphal progress through the land? Did not all the women of Vienna stream forth beyond the gates to meet her coffin, hailing her with green boughs in their hands, spreading draperies on the road, and singing songs of praise to the bride of heaven, who was being brought home to the bridegroom's house?—Why do you laugh?

SALLUST.

I, my lord?

JULIAN.

Ever since, I have heard bridal songs night and day. Listen, listen; they are wafting her up to glory. Ay, she was indeed a true Christian woman. She observed the commandment strictly;—she gave to Caesar what was Caesar's, and to the other she gave——; but 'twas not of t h a t you came to speak; you are not initiated in the secrets of the faith, Sallust!—What news, I ask?

SALLUST.

The weightiest news is that on learning of the events at Lutetia, the Emperor fled hastily to Antioch.

JULIAN.

That news I know. No doubt Constantius already saw us in imagination before the gates of Rome.

SALLUST.

The friends who boldly cast in their lot with you in this dangerous business, saw in imagination the same thing.

JULIAN.

The time is not auspicious, Sallust! Know you not that in the martial games, before we left Lutetia, my shield broke in pieces, so that only the handle remained in my grasp? And know you not that, when I was mounting my horse, the groom stumbled as I swung myself up from his folded hands?

SALLUST.

Yet you gained the saddle, my lord!

JULIAN.

But the man fell.

SALLUST.

Better men will fall if Caesar loiters.

JULIAN.

The Emperor is at death's door.

SALLUST.

The Emperor still lives. The letters you wrote him as to your election——

JULIAN.

My enforced election. They constrained me; I had no choice.

SALLUST.

The Emperor does not hold that explanation valid. He designs, as soon as he has mustered an army in the eastern provinces, to march into Gaul.

JULIAN.

How know you that——?

SALLUST.

By an accident, my lord! Believe me, I entreat you——!

JULIAN.

Good, good; when that happens, I will go to meet Constantius—not sword in hand——

SALLUST.

Not? How, then, do you think to meet him?

JULIAN.

I will render to the Emperor what is the Emperor's.

SALLUST.

Mean you that you will abdicate?

JULIAN.

The Emperor is at death's door.

SALLUST.

Oh that vain hope! [*He casts himself on his knees.*] Then take my life, my lord!

JULIAN.

What now?

SALLUST.

Caesar, take my life; I would rather die by your will than by the Emperor's.

JULIAN.

Rise, friend!

SALLUST.

No, let me lie at my Caesar's feet, and confess all. Oh, beloved master,—to have to tell you this!—When I sought you out in the camp on the Rhine,—when I recalled to you the old friendship of our Athenian days,—when I begged to share with you the dangers of war,—then, oh Caesar, I came as a secret spy, in the Emperor's pay——

JULIAN.

You——!

SALLUST.

My mind had for some time been inflamed against you. You remember that little variance in Milan—yet no little one for me, who had hoped that Caesar would help to restore my waning fortunes. Of all this they took advantage in Rome; they regarded me as the very man to spy out your doings.

JULIAN.

And you could sell yourself so basely? To so black a treachery!

SALLUST.

I was ruined, my lord; and I thought Caesar had forsaken me. Yes, my Caesar, I betrayed you——, during the first few months; but not afterwards. Your friendliness, your magnanimity, all the favour you showed me——; I became, what I had professed to be, your faithful adherent; and in my secret letters to Rome I put my employers on false scents.

JULIAN.

Those letters were from y o u?—Oh, Sallust!

SALLUST.

They contained nothing to injure you, my lord! What others may have written, I know not; I only know that I often enough groaned in anguish under my enforced and hated silence. I ventured as far as I by any means dared. That letter written to an unnamed man in your camp, which contained an account of the Emperor's triumphal entry in Rome, and which you found one morning on the march to Lutetia pushed under your tent-flap——; you did find it, my lord?

JULIAN.

Yes, yes——?

SALLUST.

That was directed to me, and chance favoured me in bringing it into your hands. I dared not speak. I longed to, but I could not; I put off from day to day the confession of my shame. Oh, punish me, my lord; see, here I lie!

JULIAN.

Stand up; you are dearer to me thus,—conquered without my will and against your own. Stand up, friend of my soul; no one shall touch a hair of your head.

SALLUST.

Rather take the life which you will not long have power to shield. You say the Emperor is at death's door. [*He rises.*] My Caesar, what I have sworn to conceal, I now reveal to you. There is no hope for you in the Emperor's decay. The Emperor is taking a new wife.

JULIAN.

Ah, what madness! How can you think——?

SALLUST.

The Emperor is taking a new wife, my lord! [*He hands him some papers.*] Read, read, noble Caesar; these letters will leave you no room for doubt.

JULIAN.

[*Seizing the papers, and reading.*] Yes, by the light and might of Helios——!

SALLUST.

Oh that I had dared to speak sooner!

JULIAN.

[*Still reading.*] He take a woman to wife! Constantius,—that dwindling shadow of a man——! Faustina,—what is this?—young, scarcely nineteen,—a daughter of——ah! a daughter of that insolent tribe. Therefore,

of course, a zealous Christian woman. [*He folds the papers together.*] You are right, Sallust; his decay gives no room for hope. What though he be decrepit, dying,—what of that? Is not Faustina pious. An annunciating angel will appear; or even——; ha-ha!—in short,—by some means or other,—a young Caesar will be forthcoming, and thus——

SALLUST.

Delay means ruin.

JULIAN.

This move has long been planned in all secrecy, Sallust! Ah, now all the riddles are solved. Helena——, 'twas not, as I conceived, her heedless tongue that destroyed her——

SALLUST.

No, my lord!

JULIAN.

——they thought,—they believed that——! oh inscrutable, even-handed retribution! that was why she had to die.

SALLUST.

Yes, that was the reason. I was the man they first pitched upon in Rome. Oh, my lord, you cannot doubt that I refused to do it? I pleaded the impossibility of finding an occasion; they assured me that the abominable design was abandoned, and then——!

JULIAN.

They will not stop at—at the double corpse in the sarcophagus up yonder. Constantius takes another wife. That is why I was to be disarmed in Lutetia.

SALLUST.

One thing alone can save you, my Caesar: you must act before the Emperor has recruited his forces.

JULIAN.

What if, of my own free will, I withdrew into solitude, devoting myself to that wisdom which I have here been forced to neglect? Would the new men in power leave me undisturbed? Would not the very fact of my existence be like a sword hanging over their heads?

SALLUST.

The kinsmen of the Empress that is to be are the men who surrounded Gallus Caesar in his last hours.

JULIAN.

The tribune Scudilo. Trust me, friend,—I have not forgotten that. And am I to yield and fall before this bloodthirsty Emperor! Am I to spare him who for long years has stumbled about among the corpses of my nearest kin!

SALLUST.

If you spare him, in less than three months he will be stumbling among the corpses of your adherents.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes; there you are right. It is almost my imperative duty to stand up against him. If I do, 'twill not be for my own sake. Do not the weal and woe of thousands hang in the balance? Are not thousands of

lives at stake? Or could I have averted this extremity? You are more to blame than I, Sallust! Why did you not speak before?

SALLUST.

In Rome they made me swear a solemn oath of secrecy.

JULIAN.

An oath? Indeed! By the gods of your forefathers?

SALLUST.

Yes, my lord—by Zeus and by Apollo.

JULIAN.

And yet you break your oath?

SALLUST.

I wish to live.

JULIAN.

But the gods?

SALLUST.

The gods—they are far away.

JULIAN.

Yes, your gods are far away; they hamper no one; they are a burden to no one; they leave a man elbow-room for action. Oh, that Greek happiness, that sense of freedom——!

You said that the Emperor, vengeful as he is, will pour out the blood of my friends. Yes, who can doubt that?

Was Knodomar spared? Did not that harmless captive pay with his life for an error of language? For—I know it, Sallust—they killed him; that tale about the barbarian's homesickness was a lie. Then what may not we expect? In what a hateful light must not Decentius have represented matters in Rome?

SALLUST.

That you may best understand from the hasty flight of the court to Antioch.

JULIAN.

And am I not my army's father, Sallust?

SALLUST.

The soldiers' father; their wives' and children's buckler and defence.

JULIAN.

And what will be the fate of the empire should I waver now? A decrepit Emperor, and after him a helpless child, upon the throne; faction and revolt; every man's hand against his neighbour, in the struggle for power.—Not many nights ago I saw a vision. A figure appeared before me, with a halo round its head; it looked wrathfully upon me, and said: "Choose!" With that it vanished away, like morning mist. Hitherto I had interpreted it as referring to something far different; but now that I know of the Emperor's approaching marriage——

Yes, indeed, it is time to choose, ere misfortune overwhelms the empire. I am not thinking of my own interest; but d a r e I shirk the choice, Sallust? Is it

not my duty to the Emperor to defend my life? Have I a right to stand with folded arms and await the murderers whom he, in his mad panic, is bribing to hew me down? Have I a right to give this unhappy Constantius an opportunity of heaping fresh blood-guiltiness upon his sinful head? Were it not better for him—as the Scriptures say—that he should suffer wrong rather than do wrong? If, therefore, this that I do to my kinsman can be called a wrong, I hold that the wrong is wiped out by the fact that it hinders my kinsman from inflicting a wrong on me. I think that both Plato and Marcus Aurelius, that crowned bridegroom of wisdom, would support me in that. At any rate, it would be no unworthy problem for the philosophers, my dear Sallust!—Oh that I had Libanius here!

SALLUST.

My lord, you are yourself so far advanced in philosophy, that——

JULIAN.

True, true; yet I would fain hear the views of certain others. Not that I am vacillating. Do not think that! Nor do I see any reason to doubt a favourable issue. For those omens should by no means discourage us. The fact that I retained the handle, when my shield broke during the games, may with ample reason, I think, be taken to mean that I shall succeed in holding what my hand has grasped. And if, in vaulting upon my horse, I overthrew the man who helped me to mount, may not this portend a sudden fall to Constantius, to whom I owe my rise? Be this as it may, my Sallust, I look forward to composing a treatise which shall most clearly justify——

SALLUST.

Very good, my gracious lord; but the soldiers are impatient; they would fain see you, and learn their fate from your own lips.

JULIAN.

Go, go and pacify them;—tell them that Caesar will presently show himself.

SALLUST.

My lord, 'tis not Caesar, it is the Emperor himself they want to see.

JULIAN.

The Emperor is coming.

SALLUST.

Then he comes—though empty-handed—yet with the lives of thousands in his hands!

JULIAN.

A barter, Sallust; the lives of thousands against the death of thousands.

SALLUST.

Have your enemies the right to live?

JULIAN.

Happy you, whose gods are afar off. Oh, to possess this hardihood of will——!

A VOICE.

[*Calling from deep in the galleries below.*] Julian, Julian!

SALLUST.

Ah! What is that?

JULIAN.

Leave me, dear friend; go quickly!

THE VOICE.

Silence the psalm-singing, Julian!

SALLUST.

It calls again. Oh, then it is true!

JULIAN.

What is true?

SALLUST.

That you abide down here with a mysterious stranger, a soothsayer or a magician, who came to you by night.

JULIAN.

Ha-ha; do they say that? Go, go!

SALLUST.

I conjure you, my lord,—have done with these noxious dreams. Come with me; come up to the light of day!

THE VOICE.

[*Nearer, underneath.*] All my labour is vain.

JULIAN.

[*Speaking down the passage to the right.*] No sign, my brother?

THE VOICE.

Desolation and emptiness.

JULIAN.

Oh, Maximus!

SALLUST.

Maximus!

JULIAN.

Go, I tell you! If I leave this house of corruption, it will be as Emperor.

SALLUST.

I implore you——; what seek you here in the darkness?

JULIAN.

Light. Go, go!

SALLUST.

If Caesar loiters, I fear he will find the way barred against him.

[*He goes by the passage on the left. A little while afterwards,* MAXIMUS THE MYSTIC *ascends the steps; he wears a white sacrificial fillet round his brow; in his hand is a long, bloody knife.*

JULIAN.

Speak, my Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

All my labour is vain, I tell you. Why could you not silence the psalm-singing? It strangled all the omens; they would have spoken, but could utter nothing.

JULIAN.

Silence, darkness;—and I can wait no longer! What do you counsel me to do?

MAXIMUS.

Go forward blindly, Emperor Julian. The light will seek you out.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes, yes; that I, too, believe. I need not, after all, have sent for you all this long way. Know you what I have just heard——?

MAXIMUS.

I will not know what you have heard. Take your fate into your own hands.

JULIAN.

[*Pacing restlessly up and down.*] After all, what is he, this Constantius—this Fury-haunted sinner, this mouldering ruin of what was once a man?

MAXIMUS.

Be that his epitaph, Emperor Julian!

JULIAN.

In his whole treatment of me, has he not been like a rudderless wreck,—now drifting to the left on the current of suspicion, now hurled to the right by the storm-gust of remorse? Did he not stagger, terror-stricken, up to the imperial throne, his purple mantle dripping with my father's blood? perhaps with my mother's too?—Had not all my kin to perish that he might sit secure? No, not all; Gallus was spared, and I;—a couple of lives must be left wherewith to buy himself a little pardon. Then he drifted into the current of suspicion again. Remorse wrung from him the title of Caesar for Gallus; then suspicion wrung from him Caesar's death-warrant. And I? Do I owe him thanks for the life he has hitherto vouchsafed me? One after the other; first Gallus, and then——; every night I have sweated with terror lest the next day should be my last.

MAXIMUS.

Were Constantius and death your worst terrors? Think?

JULIAN.

No, you are right. The priests——! My whole youth has been one long dread of the Emperor and of Christ. Oh, he is terrible, that mysterious—that merciless god-man! At every turn, wheresoever I wished to go, he met me, stark and stern, with his unconditional, inexorable commands.

MAXIMUS.

And those commands—were they within you?

JULIAN.

Always without. Always "Thou shalt." If my soul gathered itself up in one gnawing and consuming hate towards the murderer of my kin, what said the commandment: "Love thine enemy!" If my mind, athirst for beauty, longed for scenes and rites from the bygone world of Greece, Christianity swooped down on me with its "Seek the one thing needful!" If I felt the sweet lusts of the flesh towards this or that, the Prince of Renunciation terrified me with his: "Kill the body that the soul may live!"—All that is human has become unlawful since the day when the seer of Galilee became ruler of the world. Through him, life has become death. Love and hatred, both are sins. Has he, then, transformed man's flesh and blood? Has not earth-bound man remained what he ever was? Our inmost, healthy soul rebels against it all;—and yet we are to w i l l in the very teeth of our own will! Thou shalt, shalt, shalt!

MAXIMUS.

And you have advanced no further than that! Shame on you!

JULIAN.

I?

MAXIMUS.

Yes, you, the man of Athens and of Ephesus.

JULIAN.

Ah, those times, Maximus! 'Twas easy to choose then. What were we really working at? A philosophic system; neither more nor less.

MAXIMUS.

Is it not written somewhere in your Scriptures: "Either with us or against us"?

JULIAN.

Did not Libanius remain the man he was, whether he took the affirmative in a disputation, or the negative? This lies deeper. Here it is action that must be faced. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." In Athens I once made a game of that;—but it is no game. You cannot grasp it, you, who have never been under the power of the god-man. It is more than a doctrine he has spread over the world; it is an enchantment, that binds the soul in chains. He who has once been under it,—I believe he can never quite shake it off.

MAXIMUS.

Because you do not wholly w i l l.

JULIAN.

How can I w i l l the impossible?

MAXIMUS.

Is it worth while to w i l l what is possible?

JULIAN.

Word-froth from the lecture-halls! You can no longer cram my mind with that. And yet——oh no, no, Maximus! But you cannot understand how it is with us. We are like vines transplanted into a new, strange soil; transplant us back again, and we die; yet in the new soil we cannot thrive.

MAXIMUS.

We? Whom do you call we?

JULIAN.

All who are under the terror of the revelation.

MAXIMUS.

A terror of shadows!

JULIAN.

Be that as it may. But do you not see that this paralysing terror has curdled and coiled itself up into a wall around the Emperor? Ah, I see very well why the great Constantine promoted such a will-binding doctrine to power and authority in the empire. No bodyguard with spears and shields could form such a bulwark round the throne as this benumbing creed, for ever pointing beyond our earthly life. Have you looked closely at these Christians? Hollow-eyed, pale-cheeked, flat-breasted, all; they are like the linen-weavers of Byssus; they brood their lives away unspurred by ambition; the sun shines for them, and they do not see it; the earth offers them its fulness, and they desire it not;—all their desire is to renounce and suffer, that they may come to die.

MAXIMUS.

Then use them as they are; but you yourself must stand without. Emperor or Galilean;—t h a t is the alternative. Be a thrall under the terror, or monarch in the land of sunshine and gladness! You cannot will contradictions; and yet that is what you would fain do.

You try to unite what cannot be united,—to reconcile two irreconcilables; therefore it is that you lie here rotting in the darkness.

JULIAN.

Show me light if you can!

MAXIMUS.

Are you that Achilles, whom your mother dreamed that she should give to the world? A tender heel alone makes no man an Achilles. Arise, my lord! Confident of victory, like a knight on his fiery steed, you must trample on the Galilean, if you would reach the imperial throne——

JULIAN.

Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

My beloved Julian, look at the world around you! Those death-desiring Christians you speak of are fewest of the few. And how is it with all the others? Are not their minds falling away from the Master, one by one? Answer me,—what has become of this strange gospel of love? Does not sect rage against sect? And the bishops, those gold-bedecked magnates, who call themselves the chief shepherds of the church! Do they yield even to the great men of the court in greed and ambition and sycophancy——?

JULIAN.

They are not all like that; think of the great Athanasius of Alexandria——

MAXIMUS.

Athanasius stood alone. And where is Athanasius now? Did they not drive him out, because he would not sell himself to serve the Emperor's will? Was he not forced to take refuge in the Libyan desert, where he was devoured by lions? And can you name me o n e other like Athanasius? Think of Maris, the Bishop of Chalcedon, who has now changed sides three times in the Arian controversy. Think of old Bishop Marcus, of Arethusa; him you know from your boyhood. Has he not lately, in the teeth of both law and justice, taken all municipal property from the citizens, and transferred it to the church? And remember the feeble, vacillating Bishop of Nazianzus, who is the laughing-stock of his own community, because he answers yes and no in the same cause, in the hope to please both parties.

JULIAN.

True, true, true!

MAXIMUS.

These are your brothers in arms, my Julian; you will find none better among them. Or perhaps you count upon those two great Galilean lights that were to be, in Cappadocia? Ha-ha; Gregory, the bishop's son, pleads causes in his native town, and Basil, on his estate in the far east, is buried in the writings of secular philosophers.

JULIAN.

Yes, I know it well. On all sides they fall away! Hekebolius, my former teacher, has grown rich through his zeal for the faith, and his expositions of it; and since

then——! Maximus—it has come to this, that I stand almost alone in earnestness.

MAXIMUS.

You stand q u i t e alone. Your whole army is either in headlong flight, or lying slain around you. Sound the battle-call,—and none will hear you; advance,—and none will follow you! Dream not that you can do anything for a cause which has despaired of itself. You will be beaten, I tell you! And where will you turn then? Disowned by Constantius, you will be disowned by all other powers on earth,—and over the earth. Or will you flee to the Galilean's bosom? How stands the account between you and him? Did you not own, a moment ago, that you are under the terror? Have you his commands within you? Do you love your enemy, Constantius, even if you do not smite him? Do you hate the lusts of the flesh or the alluring joys of this world, even if you do not, like a heated swimmer, plunge into their depths? Do you renounce the world, because you have not courage to make it your own? And are you so very sure that—if you die here—you shall live yonder?

JULIAN.

[*Pacing to and fro.*] What has he done for me, he who exacts so much? If he hold the reins of the world-chariot in his hands, it must have been within his power to——

[*The psalm-singing in the church becomes louder.*

Listen, listen! They call that serving him. And he accepts it as a sweet-smelling sacrifice. Praise of himself,—and praise of her in the coffin! If he be omniscient, how then can he——?

THE CHAMBERLAIN EUTHERIUS.

[*Coming hastily down through the passage on the left.*] My Caesar! My lord, my lord; where are you?

JULIAN.

Here, Eutherius? What would you with me?

EUTHERIUS.

You must come up, my lord;—you must see it with your own eyes;—the Princess's body is working miracles.

JULIAN.

You lie!

EUTHERIUS.

I do not lie, my lord! I am no believer in this foreign doctrine; but what I have seen I cannot doubt.

JULIAN.

What have you seen?

EUTHERIUS.

The whole town is in a frenzy. They are bearing the sick and crippled to the Princess's bier; the priests let them touch it, and they go away healed.

JULIAN.

And this you yourself have seen?

EUTHERIUS.

Yes, my lord; I saw an epileptic woman go forth from the church healed, praising the Galileans' God.

JULIAN.

Ah, Maximus, Maximus!

EUTHERIUS.

Hark, how the Christians exult;—some fresh miracle must have happened.

THE PHYSICIAN ORIBASES.

[*Calling out in the passage to the left.*] Eutherius,—have you found him? Eutherius, Eutherius, where is Caesar?

JULIAN.

[*Meeting him.*] Here, here;—is it true, Oribases?

ORIBASES.

[*Coming forward.*] Incredible, inexplicable,—and yet true; they touch the bier, the priests read and pray over them, and they are healed; from time to time a voice proclaims: "Holy, holy, is the pure woman!"

JULIAN.

A voice proclaims——?

ORIBASES.

The voice of one invisible, my Caesar; a voice high up under the vaultings of the church——; no man knows whence it comes.

JULIAN.

[*Stands a moment immovable, then turns suddenly to* MAXIMUS, *and cries:*] Life or the lie!

MAXIMUS.

Choose!

ORIBASES.

Come, come, my lord; the awe-stricken soldiers threaten you——

JULIAN.

Let them threaten.

ORIBASES.

They accuse you and me of the Princess's death——

JULIAN.

I will come; I will satisfy them——

ORIBASES.

There is only o n e way: you must turn their thoughts in another direction, my lord;—they are wild with despair over the fate awaiting them if you delay any longer.

MAXIMUS.

Now go to heaven, thou fool; now die for thy Lord and Master!

JULIAN.

[*Grasping him by the arm.*] The Emperor's empire for me!

MAXIMUS.

Achilles!

JULIAN.

What looses the covenant?

MAXIMUS.

[*Handing him the sacrificial knife.*] This.

JULIAN.

What washes the water away?

MAXIMUS.

The blood of the sacrifice.

[*He tears off the fillet from his own brow, and fastens it round Caesar's.*

ORIBASES.

[*Drawing nearer.*] What is your purpose, my lord?

JULIAN.

Ask not.

EUTHERIUS.

Hark to the clamour! Up, up, my Caesar!

JULIAN.

First down,—then up. [*To* MAXIMUS.] The sanctuary, my beloved brother——?

MAXIMUS.

Straight below, in the second vault.

ORIBASES.

Caesar, Caesar,—whither are you going?

MAXIMUS.

To freedom.

JULIAN.

Through darkness to light. Ah——!
[*He descends into the lower galleries.*

MAXIMUS.

[*Softly, looking after him.*] So it has come at last!

EUTHERIUS.

Speak, speak; what mean these hidden arts?

ORIBASES.

And now, when every instant is precious——

MAXIMUS.

[*Whispering uneasily, as he shifts his place.*] These gliding, clammy shadows! Faugh! The slimy things crawling underfoot——!

ORIBASES.

[*Listening.*] The turmoil waxes, Eutherius! It is the soldiers; listen, listen!

EUTHERIUS.

It is the song in the church——

ORIBASES.

No, 'tis the soldiers!—here they come!

The Knight SALLUST *appears up in the gallery, surrounded by a great crowd of excited soldiers. The Standard-Bearer* MAURUS *is amongst them.*

SALLUST.

Be reasonable, I entreat you——!

THE SOLDIERS.

Caesar has betrayed us! Caesar shall die!

SALLUST.

And what then, madmen!

MAURUS.

What then? With Caesar's head we will buy forgiveness——

THE SOLDIERS.

Come forth, come forth, Caesar!

SALLUST.

Caesar,—my Caesar, where are you?

JULIAN.

[*Calling out, in the vault underneath.*] Helios! Helios!

MAXIMUS.

Free!

THE CHOIR IN THE CHURCH ABOVE.

Our Father which art in heaven!

SALLUST.

Where is he? Eutherius, Oribases,—what is here afoot?

THE CHOIR.

[*In the church.*] Hallowed be Thy name!

JULIAN.

[*Comes up the steps; he has blood on his forehead, on his breast, and on his hands.*] It is finished!

THE SOLDIERS.

Caesar!

SALLUST.

Blood-stained——! What have you done?

JULIAN.

Cloven the mists of terror.

MAXIMUS.

Creation lies in your hand.

THE CHOIR.

[*In the church.*] Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven! [*The chant continues during what follows.*

JULIAN.

Now Constantius has no longer a bodyguard.

MAURUS.

What say you, my lord?

JULIAN.

Ah! My faithful ones! Up into the daylight to Rome, and to Greece!

THE SOLDIERS.

Long live the Emperor Julian!

JULIAN.

We will not look back; all ways lie open before us. Up into the daylight! Through the church! The liars shall be silenced——!

[*He rushes up the steps in the background.*

The army mine, the treasure mine, the throne mine!

THE CHOIR.

[*In the church.*] Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil!

[JULIAN *throws wide the doors, revealing the brightly-lighted interior of the church. The priests stand before the high altar; crowds of worshippers kneel below, around the Princess's bier.*

JULIAN.

Free, free! Mine is the kingdom!

SALLUST.

[*Calls to him.*] And the power and the glory!

THE CHOIR.

[*In the church.*] Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory——

JULIAN.

[*Dazzled by the light.*] Ah!

MAXIMUS.

Victory!

THE CHOIR.

[*In the church.*] ——For ever and ever, amen!

THE EMPEROR JULIAN

CHARACTERS

THE EMPEROR JULIAN.
NEVITA, *a general.*
POTAMON, *a goldsmith.*
CAESARIUS OF NAZIANZUS, *court physician.*
THEMISTIUS, *an orator.*
MAMERTINUS, *an orator.*
URSULUS, *treasurer.*
EUNAPIUS, *a barber.*
BARBARA, *a procuress.*
HEKEBOLIUS, *a theologian.*
Courtiers and Officers of State.
Citizens of Constantinople.
People taking part in the procession of Dionysus, flute-players, dancers, jugglers, and women.
Envoys from Eastern Kings.
THE CHAMBERLAIN EUTHERIUS.
Servants of the palace.
Judges, orators, teachers, and citizens of Antioch.
MEDON, *a corn-dealer.*
MALCHUS, *a tax-gatherer.*
GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *Caesarius's brother.*
PHOCION, *a dyer.*
PUBLIA, *a woman of Antioch.*
HILARION, *son of Publia.*
AGATHON OF CAPPADOCIA.
MARIS, *Bishop of Chalcedon.*
People taking part in the procession of Apollo, priests, servants of the temple, harp-players and watchmen of the city.
AGATHON'S *younger brother.*
A procession of Christian prisoners.
HERACLIUS, *a poet.*
ORIBASES, *court physician.*
LIBANIUS, *an orator, and chief magistrate of Antioch.*
APOLLINARIS, *a hymn-writer.*
CYRILLUS, *a teacher.*
An old priest of Cybele.
Psalm-singers of Antioch.
FROMENTINUS, *a captain.*
JOVIAN, *a general.*
MAXIMUS THE MYSTIC.
NUMA, *a soothsayer.*
Two other Etruscan soothsayers.
PRINCE HORMISDAS, *a Persian exile.*
ANATOLUS, *captain of the life-guard.*
PRISCUS, *a philosopher.*
KYTRON, *a philosopher.*
AMMIAN, *a captain.*
BASIL OF CAESAREA.
MAKRINA, *his sister.*
A Persian deserter.
Roman and Greek soldiers.
Persian warriors.

The first act passes in Constantinople, the second and third in Antioch, the fourth in and about the eastern territories of the empire, and the fifth on the plains beyond the Tigris. The events take place in the interval between December, A.D. 361, *and the end of June,* A.D. 363.

THE EMPEROR JULIAN

PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

ACT FIRST

SCENE FIRST

The port of Constantinople. In the foreground to the right, a richly-decorated landing-stage, spread with carpets. On the elevated quay, at a little distance from the landing-stage, is seen a veiled stone, surrounded by a guard. Far out on the Bosphorus lies the imperial fleet, hung with flags of mourning.

A countless multitude, in boats and on the beach. Near the end of the landing-stage stands the EMPEROR JULIAN, *robed in purple and decked with golden ornaments. He is surrounded by Courtiers and High Officers of State. Among those standing nearest to him are* NEVITA, *the commander of the forces, and the court physician,* CAESARIUS, *together with the orators,* THEMISTIUS *and* MAMERTINUS.

JULIAN.

[*Looking out over the water.*] What a meeting! The dead Emperor and the living.—Alas that he should have drawn his last breath in such distant regions! Alas that, in spite of all my haste, I should not have had the sweet

consolation of embracing my kinsman for the last time! A bitter lot for both of us!—

Where is the ship with the body?

NEVITA.

There it comes.

JULIAN.

That long boat?

NEVITA.

Yes, most gracious Emperor.

JULIAN.

My poor kinsman! So great in life; and now to have to content you with so low a roof! Now you will not strike your forehead against the coffin-lid, you who bowed your head in riding through the Arch of Constantine.

A CITIZEN AMONG THE SPECTATORS.

[*To the Goldsmith* POTAMON.] How young he looks, our new Emperor!

POTAMON.

But he has grown more stalwart. When I last saw him he was a lean stripling: that is now nine or ten years ago.

ANOTHER CITIZEN.

Ay, he has done great things in those years.

A WOMAN.

And all the dangers he has passed through, ever since his childhood!

A PRIEST.

Marvellously has he been shielded from them all; the hand of heaven is over him.

POTAMON.

Rumour says that in Gaul he placed himself in very different hands.

THE PRIEST.

Lies, lies; you may depend upon it.

JULIAN.

Now he comes. The Sun, whom I invoke, and the great thunder-wielding God, know that I never desired Constantius's death. That was far indeed from being my wish. I have offered up prayers for his life.—Tell me, Caesarius,—you must know best,—have they shown all due honour, on the journey, to the imperial corpse?

CAESARIUS.

The funeral procession was like a conqueror's triumph through the whole of Asia Minor. In every town we traversed, believers thronged the streets; through whole nights the churches echoed with prayers and hymns; thousands of burning tapers transformed the darkness into high noon——

JULIAN.

Good, good, good!—I am seized with an unspeakable misgiving at the thought of taking the helm of state after

so great and virtuous and well-beloved an Emperor. Why was it not my lot to live in peaceful retirement?

MAMERTINUS.

And who could have sufficed to this high and difficult calling so completely as you, incomparable lord? I call fearlessly to all those others who have aspired to the empire: Come, then, and take the helm of government; but take it as Julian takes it. Be on the alert night and day for the common welfare. Be masters in name, and yet servants to civic freedom. Choose the foremost places in battle, and not at the feasts. Take nothing for yourselves, but lavish gifts upon all. Let your justice be equally remote from laxity and from inhumanity. Live so that no virgin on earth shall wring her hands because of you. Bid defiance—both to impenetrable Gaul, and inhospitable Germany. What would they answer? Appalled by such stern conditions, they would stop their effeminate ears, and cry: "Only a Julian is equal to such a task!"

JULIAN.

The Omnipotent grant that such high hopes may not be disappointed. But how great are my shortcomings! A shudder comes over me. To affront comparison with Alexander, Marcus Aurelius, and so many other illustrious princes! Has not Plato said that only a god can rule over men? Oh pray with me that I may escape the snares of ambition, and the temptations of power. Athens, Athens! Thither my longings turn! I was as a man taking reasonable exercise for the sake of his health;—and now, they come and say to me, "Go forth into the arena, and conquer in the Olympian games. The eyes

of all Greece are upon you!" May I not well be panic-stricken even before the contest begins?

THEMISTIUS.

Panic-stricken, oh Emperor? Have you not already the applause of Greece? Are you not come to reinstate all exiled virtues in their ancient rights? Do we not find concentred in you all the victorious genius of Herakles, of Dionysus, of Solon, of——

JULIAN.

Hush! Only the praise of the dead shall be heard to-day. The boat has reached the wharf. Take my crown and my chains; I will not wear the insignia of empire at such a time as this.

[*He hands the ornaments to one of the bystanders. The funeral procession advances along the landing-stage, with great pomp. Priests with lighted candles walk at its head; the coffin is drawn on a low-wheeled carriage; church banners are borne before and after the carriage; choristers swing censers; crowds of Christian citizens follow after.*

JULIAN.

[*Laying his hand on the coffin, and sighing audibly.*] Ah!

A SPECTATOR.

Did he cross himself?

ANOTHER IN THE CROWD.

No.

THE FIRST.

You see; you see!

A THIRD SPECTATOR.

And he did not bow before the sacred image.

THE FIRST.

[*To the second.*] You see! What did I tell you?

JULIAN.

Pass onward to thy home, amid pomp and honour, soulless body of my kinsman! I make not this dust answerable for the wrongs thy spirit did me. What do I say? Was it thy spirit that dealt so hardly with my house, that I alone am left? Was it thy spirit that caused my childhood to be darkened with a thousand terrors? Was it thy spirit that bade fall that noble Caesar's head? Was it thou who didst allot to me, an untried stripling, so difficult a post in inhospitable Gaul, and afterwards, when disaffection and mischance had failed to crush me, didst seek to rob me of the honour of my victories? Oh Constantius, my kinsman,—not from thy great heart did all this spring. Wherefore didst thou writhe in remorse and anguish; why didst thou see gory shades around thee, on thy last bed of pain? Evil councillors embittered thy life and thy death. I know them, these councillors; they were men who took hurt from living in the ceaseless sunshine of thy favour. I know them, these men, who so obsequiously clothed themselves in that garb of faith which was most in favour at court.

HEATHEN CITIZENS.

[*Among the spectators.*] Long live the Emperor Julian!

CAESARIUS.

Most gracious lord, the procession waits——

JULIAN.

[*To the priests.*] Stay not your pious hymns on my account. Forward, my friends!

[*The procession passes slowly out to the left.*

Follow whoso will, and remain whoso will. But this you shall all know to-day, that my place is here.

[*Uneasiness and movement in the crowd.*

What am I? The Emperor. But in saying that, have I said all? Is there not one imperial office which seems to have been shamefully wiped out of remembrance in these later years? What was that crowned philosopher, Marcus Aurelius? Emperor? Only Emperor? I could almost ask: was he not something more than Emperor? Was he not also the Supreme Pontiff?

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

What says the Emperor? What was that? What did he say?

THEMISTIUS.

Oh sire, is it indeed your purpose——?

JULIAN.

Not even my uncle Constantine the Great dared to renounce this dignity. Even after he had conceded to a certain new doctrine such very extraordinary privileges, he was still called the Chief Priest by all who held fast to the ancient divinities of the Grecian race. I will not here enlarge upon the melancholy disuse into which this office has fallen of late years, but will merely remark that none

of my exalted predecessors, not even he to whom, with tear-stained faces, we to-day bid our last farewell, has dared to reject it. Should I presume to take any step which so wise and just emperors did not deem right or expedient? Far be it from me!

THEMISTIUS.

Oh great Emperor, mean you by this——?

JULIAN.

I mean by this, that there shall be perfect freedom for all citizens. Cling to the Christians' God, you who find it conduce to your souls' repose. As for me, I dare not build my hopes on a god who has hitherto been my foe in all my undertakings. I know by infallible signs and tokens that the victories I won on the Gallic frontier I owe to those other divinities who favoured Alexander in a somewhat similar way. Under watch and ward of these divinities, I passed unscathed through all dangers; and, in especial, it was they who furthered my journey hither with such marvellous speed and success that, as I gathered from cries in the streets, some people have come to look upon me as a divine being,—which is a great exaggeration, my friends! But certain it is, that I dare not show myself ungrateful for such untiring proofs of favour.

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

[*Subdued.*] What is he going to do?

JULIAN.

Therefore, I restore to their pristine rights the venerable Gods of our forefathers. But no injury shall be done to the God of the Galileans, nor to the God of the

Jews. The temples, which pious rulers of old erected with such admirable art, shall rise again in rejuvenated splendour, with altars and statues, each for its especial God, so that seemly worship may once more be offered them. But I will by no means tolerate any vengeful assaults upon the churches of the Christians; neither shall their graveyards be molested, nor any other places which a strange delusion leads them to regard as sacred. We will bear with the errors of others; I myself have laboured under illusions;—but over that I cast a veil. What I have thought upon things divine since my one-and-twentieth year, I will not now dwell upon; I will only say that I congratulate those who follow my example,—that I smile at those who will not tread in my footsteps,—that I will doubtless try to persuade, but will not coerce any one.

[*He stops a moment expectantly; feeble applause is heard here and there among the crowd. He continues with more warmth.*

I had reckoned, not unreasonably, on grateful acclamations, where I find only wondering curiosity. Yet I ought to have known it;—there reigns a deplorable indifference among those who profess to hold fast to our ancient faith. Oppression and mockery have caused us to forget the venerable rites of our forefathers. I have inquired high and low, but scarcely a single person have I found who could speak with authority as to the ceremonies to be observed in sacrificing to Apollo or Fortuna. I must take the lead in this, as in other matters. It has cost me many sleepless nights to search out in the ancient records what tradition prescribes in such cases; but I do not complain when I remember how much we owe to these very divinities; nor am I ashamed to do everything with my own hands—— Whither away, Caesarius?

CAESARIUS.

To the church, most gracious Emperor; I would pray for the soul of my departed master.

JULIAN.

Go, go! In these matters every one is free.

[CAESARIUS, *with several of the older courtiers and officers of state, goes out to the left.*

But the freedom I concede to the meanest citizen, I claim for myself as well.——Be it known, therefore, to you all, Greeks and Romans, that I return with my whole heart to the beliefs and rites which our forefathers held sacred,—that they may be freely propagated and exercised, no less than all new and foreign opinions;—and as I am a son of this city, and therefore hold it pre-eminently dear, this I proclaim in the name of its guardian deities.

[JULIAN *gives a sign; some of the attendants withdraw the veil from the stone: an altar is seen, and, at its base, a flagon of wine, a cruse of oil, a little heap of wood, and other appurtenances. Strong but speechless emotion in the multitude, as* JULIAN *goes up to the altar, and prepares for the offering.*

THEMISTIUS.

Oh well may I, as a Greek, melt into tears at the sight of so much humility and pious zeal!

A CITIZEN.

See, he breaks the fuel himself!

ANOTHER.

Over his left thigh. Is that how it ought to be broken?

THE FIRST CITIZEN.

Doubtless, doubtless.

MAMERTINUS.

In the light of the fire you there kindle, oh, great Emperor, shall research and learning shine forth, ay, and rise rejuvenated, like that miraculous bird——

NEVITA.

That fire will temper the weapons of Greece. I know little of the Galilean figment; but this I have noted, that all who believe in them are spiritless and unfit for greater things.

THEMISTIUS.

In this fire, oh incomparable one, I see wisdom purged of all scandal and reproach. The wine of your libation is like purple, wherewith you deck the truth, and set her on a royal throne. Now, as you lift up your hands——

MAMERTINUS.

Now, as you lift up your hands, it is as though you glorified the brow of knowledge with a golden wreath; and the tears you shed——

THEMISTIUS.

[*Pressing nearer.*] Yes, yes, the tears I see you shed are like costly pearls, wherewith eloquence shall once more be rewarded in kingly wise. Once again, then, the Greeks are suffered to raise their eyes to heaven, and follow the eternal stars in their courses! How long it is since that was vouchsafed us! Have we not been forced,

for fear of spies, to tremble and bow our faces to the earth, like the brutes? Which of us dared so much as to watch the rising or the setting of the sun?

[*He turns to the crowd.*

Even you husbandmen, who have to-day flocked hither in such numbers, even you did not venture to note the position of the heavenly bodies, although by them you should have regulated your labours——

MAMERTINUS.

And you seamen,—have either you or your fathers dared to utter the names of the constellations by which you steered? Now you may do so; now all are free to——

THEMISTIUS.

Now no Greek need live on land or sea without consulting the immutable laws of the heavens; he need no longer let himself be tossed about like a plaything, by chance and circumstance; he——

MAMERTINUS.

Oh, how great is this Emperor, to whom we owe such blessings!

JULIAN.

[*Before the altar, with uplifted arms.*] Thus have I openly and in all humility made libations of oil and wine to you, ye beneficent deities, who have so long been denied these seemly observances. I have sent up my thanksgiving to thee, O Apollo, whom some of the sages—especially those of the East—call by the name of the Sun-King, because thou bringest and renewest that light, wherein life has its source and its fountain-head.—

To thee, too, I have made offering, O Dionysus, god of ecstasy, who dost lift up the souls of mortals out of abasement, and exaltest them to an ennobling communion with higher spirits.—And, although I name thee last, I have not been least mindful of thee, O Fortuna! Without thine aid, should I have stood here? I know indeed that thou dost no longer visibly manifest thyself, as in the golden age, of which the peerless blind singer has told us. But this I know, too,—and herein all other philosophers are at one with me—that it is thou who hast the decisive share in the choice of the guardian spirit, good or evil, that is to accompany every man on his path through life. I have no cause to chide thee, O Fortuna! Rather have I the strongest reason to yield thee all thanks and praise. This duty, precious to my heart, have I this day fulfilled. I have not shrunk from even the humblest office. Here I stand in open day; the eyes of all Greece are upon me; I expect the voice of all Greece to unite with mine in acclaiming you, oh ye immortal gods!

[*During the sacrificial service, most of the Christian onlookers have gradually stolen away; only a little knot remains behind. When* JULIAN *ceases speaking, there arise only faint sounds of approval mingled with subdued laughter, and whispers of astonishment.*

JULIAN.

[*Looking round.*] What is this? What has become of them all? Are they slinking away?

THEMISTIUS.

Yes, red with shame at the ingratitude of so many years.

MAMERTINUS.

Nay, 'twas the flush of joy. They have gone to spread the great tidings throughout the city.

JULIAN.

[*Leaving the altar.*] The ignorant multitude is ever perplexed by what is unaccustomed. My task will be arduous; but no labour shall daunt me. What better befits a philosopher than to root out error? In this mission I count on your aid, enlightened friends! But our thoughts must turn elsewhere, for a little time. Follow me; I go to other duties.

[*He departs hastily, without returning the citizens' greetings; the courtiers, and his other attendants, follow him.*

SCENE SECOND

A great hall in the Imperial Palace. Doors on both sides, and in the back; in front, to the left, on a daïs by the wall, stands the imperial throne.

The EMPEROR JULIAN, *surrounded by his court and high officials, among whom is* URSULUS, *the Treasurer, with the orators* THEMISTIUS *and* MAMERTINUS.

JULIAN.

So far have the gods aided us. Now the work will roll onwards, like the waves of a spring flood. The sullen ill-will which I can trace in certain quarters where I least expected it, shall not disturb my equanimity. Is it not precisely the distinguishing mark of true wisdom, that it begets patience! We all know that by suitable

remedies bodily ills may be allayed;—but can fire and sword annihilate delusions as to things divine? And what avails it though your hands make offerings, if your souls condemn the action of your hands?

Thus will we live in concord with each other. My court shall be open to all men of mark, whatever their opinions. Let us show the world the rare and august spectacle of a court without hypocrisy—assuredly the only one of its kind—a court in which flatterers are counted the most dangerous of enemies. We will censure and expostulate with one another, when it is needful, yet without loving one another the less.

[*To* NEVITA, *who enters by the back.*

Your face is radiant, Nevita;—what good tidings do you bring?

NEVITA.

The best and happiest indeed. A great company of envoys from princes in furthest India have come to bring you gifts, and to entreat your friendship.

JULIAN.

Ah, tell me,—to what peoples do they belong?

NEVITA.

To the Armenians, and other races beyond the Tigris. Indeed, some of the strangers aver they come from the islands of Diu and Serandib.

JULIAN.

From the uttermost verge of the earth, my friends!

THEMISTIUS.

Even so far has rumour carried your name and your glory!

MAMERTINUS.

Even in those unknown regions is your sword a terror to princes and peoples!

THEMISTIUS.

Diu and Serandib! Far east in the Indian sea——

MAMERTINUS.

I do not hesitate to say: beyond the orb of the world——

JULIAN.

Bid the barber come!

[*A courtier goes out to the right.*

I will receive the envoys in seemly guise,—yet without display or adornment. So would the august Marcus Aurelius have received them; and him I make my pattern, rather than the Emperor whose death we have lately had to mourn. No more parade of transitory mundane things! Even the barbarians shall see that wisdom—in the person, truly, of her meanest servant—has resumed her place upon the throne.

[*The courtier returns with* EUNAPIUS, *the barber, who is magnificently attired.*

JULIAN.

[*Looks at him in astonishment, then goes to meet him, and greets him.*] What seek you here, my lord?

EUNAPIUS.

Gracious Emperor, you have commanded my attendance——

JULIAN.

You mistake, friend; I have not sent for any of my councillors.

EUNAPIUS.

Most gracious Emperor——

URSULUS.

Pardon me, sire; this man is the imperial barber.

JULIAN.

What do I hear? Can it be? This man—oh, you jest—this man, in silken raiment, with gold-embroidered shoes, is——? Ah, indeed! So you are the barber! [*He bows before him.*] Never shall I presume to let myself be served by such delicate hands.

EUNAPIUS.

Most gracious Emperor,—I pray you, for God and my Saviour's sake——

JULIAN.

Ho-ho! A Galilean! Did I not think so! Is this the self-denial you boast of? But I know you well! What temple of what godhead have you plundered, or how many dips have you made into the Emperor's coffers, to attain such magnificence as this?—You may go; I have no occasion for you. [EUNAPIUS *goes out to the right.*

Tell me, Ursulus, what is that man's wage?

URSULUS.

Gracious Emperor, by your august predecessor's command, the daily maintenance of twenty men is assigned him——

JULIAN.

Aha! No more than that?

URSULUS.

Yes, sire; latterly he has had free stabling in the imperial stables, together with a certain yearly allowance of money, and a gold piece for every time he——

JULIAN.

And all this for a barber! What, then, must the others——? This shall not last a day longer.——Admit the foreign envoys! [NEVITA *goes out by the back.*

I will receive them with uncut hair. Better so; for although I know well that it is not the unkempt hair, nor the tattered cloak, that makes the true philosopher, yet surely the example given by both Antisthenes and Diogenes may well be respected by one who—even on the throne—desires to follow in such great teachers' footsteps.

He ascends the daïs on which stands the throne. The court ranges itself below. The Envoys, introduced by NEVITA *and the Chamberlain* EUTHERIUS, *enter in magnificent procession, accompanied by slaves, who bear gifts of all sorts.*

NEVITA.

Most gracious Lord and Emperor! Not being possessed of the noble idiom which so many eloquent men,

and you yourself not the least, have perfected beyond all other tongues,—and therewith fearful of letting barbarous sounds offend your ear,—these envoys from the princes of the East have deputed me to be their spokesman.

JULIAN.

[*Sitting on the throne.*] I am ready to hear you.

NEVITA.

First, the King of Armenia lays at your feet this suit of mail, begging you to wear it in battle against the foes of the empire, although he knows that you, invincible hero, stand under the protecting eye of the gods, who will suffer no weapon of mortal man to wound you.—Here are priceless carpets, tents, and saddle-housings from the princes beyond the Tigris. They thereby acknowledge that, if the gods have granted those lands exceeding riches, it was with the design that these riches should be at the service of their favourite.—The King of Serandib, and likewise the King of Diu, send you these weapons, sword, spear, and shield, with bows and arrows; for, they say, "We esteem it wisest to stand unarmed before the victorious lord who, like a divinity, has shown himself so mighty as to overwhelm all opposition."—In return, all pray for the supreme favour of your friendship, and especially beg that if, as report says, you propose next spring to annihilate the audacious Persian king, you will spare their territories from hostile invasion.

JULIAN.

Such an embassy cannot come quite as a surprise to me. The gifts shall be deposited in my treasury, and

through you I apprise your masters that it is my will to maintain friendship with all nations who do not—whether by force or guile—thwart my designs.—As to your being led, in your distant lands, to regard me as a divinity on account of my fortunate victories, I will not enter further into the matter. I reverence the gods too highly to arrogate to myself an unmerited place in their midst, although I know that frequently, and chiefly in the days of old, there have lived heroes and rulers who have been so greatly distinguished by the favour and grace of the gods, that it has been difficult to determine whether they should rightly be reckoned among mortals or immortals. Of such things, however, it is rash to judge, even for us Greeks. How much more, then, for you? Therefore, enough of that.—Eutherius conduct the strangers to repose, and see that they lack nothing.

[*The Envoys and their train leave the hall, conducted by* EUTHERIUS. JULIAN *descends from the daïs; the courtiers and orators surround him with admiring congratulations.*

THEMISTIUS.

So young,—and already so highly honoured above all other Emperors!

MAMERTINUS.

I ask: will not Fame lack lungs to proclaim your renown, if the gods, as I confidently hope, grant you a long life?

THEMISTIUS.

The yell of fear, uttered by the flying Alemanni on the furthest shores of the Rhine, has swept eastward until it dashed against Taurus and Caucasus——

MAMERTINUS.

——and now rolls, like the echoes of thunder, over the whole of Asia.

NEVITA.

What has so overawed the Indians is the likeness between our Greek Julian and the Macedonian Alexander——

MAMERTINUS.

Oh where is the likeness? Had King Alexander secret enemies in his own camp? Had he to struggle against an envious and backbiting imperial court?

NEVITA.

True, true; and there were no incapable generals to clog Alexander's progress.

JULIAN.

Ursulus, it is my will that the coming of these envoys shall be made known both in the city and through all regions of the empire. Everything shall be exactly set forth,—the places whence they came, and the gifts they brought with them. I will withhold from my citizens nothing that concerns my government. You may also allude in passing to the strange belief among the Indians, that Alexander has returned to earth.

URSULUS.

[*Hesitatingly.*] Pardon me, most gracious Emperor, but——

JULIAN.

Well?

URSULUS.

You have yourself said that in this court no flattery is to be tolerated——

JULIAN.

True, my friend!

URSULUS.

Then let me honestly tell you that these envoys came to seek your predecessor, not you.

JULIAN.

What do you dare to tell me?

THEMISTIUS.

Pooh, what preposterous nonsense!

MAMERTINUS.

What a fable!

URSULUS.

It is the truth. I have long known that these men were on their way,—long before the Emperor Constantius closed his eyes. Oh, my most gracious lord, let not a false vanity find its way into your young mind——

JULIAN.

Enough, enough! Then you mean to say that——

URSULUS.

Think for yourself. How could your victories in Gaul, glorious as they have been, reach the ears of such dis-

tant nations with such rapidity? When the envoys spoke of the Emperor's heroic deeds, they had in mind the war against the King of Persia——

NEVITA.

I did not know that the war against King Sapor had been so conducted as to spead terror to the ends of the earth.

URSULUS.

True; fortune has been against our arms in those regions. But 'twas the rumour of the great armament which the Emperor Constantius was preparing for the spring that alarmed the Armenians and the other nations. —Oh, reckon out the time, sire, count the days if you will, and say if it can possibly be otherwise. Your march hither from Gaul was marvellously rapid; but the journey of these men from the Indian isles——; it would be tenfold more marvellous if;—— ask them, and you will hear——

JULIAN.

[*Pale with anger.*] Why do you say all this to me?

URSULUS.

Because it is the truth, and because I cannot bear to see your fresh and fair renown darkened by borrowed trappings.

THEMISTIUS.

What audacity!

MAMERTINUS.

What brazen audacity!

JULIAN.

You cannot bear, forsooth! You cannot bear! Oh, I know you better. I know all you old courtiers. It is the gods whose glory you would disparage. For is it not to the glory of the gods that through a man they can compass such great things! But you hate them, these gods, whose temples you have thrown down, whose statues you have broken to pieces, and whose treasures you have rifled. You have scarcely even tolerated these our most beneficent deities. You have scarcely suffered the pious to cherish them secretly in their hearts. And now you would also break down the temple of gratitude which I have dedicated to them in my heart; you would rob me of the grateful belief that I am indebted to the immortals for a new and much-to-be-coveted benefaction;—for may not renown be so termed?

URSULUS.

The one God of heaven is my witness that——

JULIAN.

The one God! There we have it again! So are you always. What intolerance! Contrast yourselves with us. Do we say that our gods are the only ones? Do we not esteem both the gods of the Egyptians and that Jewish Jehovah, who has certainly done great things among his people? But you, on the contrary,—and a man like you, too, Ursulus—! Are you a Roman born of Grecian race? The one God! What barbarous effrontery!

URSULUS.

You have promised to hate no man for his conviction's sake.

JULIAN.

That I have promised; but neither will I suffer you to treat us too insolently. These envoys have not come to——? That is to say, in other words, that the great and divine Dionysus, whose especial gift it is to reveal what is hidden,—that he is not as powerful now as in bygone ages. Ought I to suffer this? Is it not overweening audacity? Am I not forced to call you to account?

URSULUS.

Then all Christians will say that it is their faith you are persecuting.

JULIAN.

No one shall be persecuted by reason of his faith. But have I the right to overlook whatever faults you may commit, simply because you are Christians? Shall your delusions shield your misdeeds? What have not your audacious crew for long been doing, both here at court and elsewhere? Have you not flattered all vices, and bowed before all caprices? Ay, what have not you yourself, Ursulus, connived at? I am thinking of that shameless, bedizened barber, that salve-stinking fool, who just now filled me with loathing. Are not you treasurer? How could you give way to his impudent demands?

URSULUS.

Is it a crime to have done my master's bidding?

JULIAN.

I will have nothing to do with such luxurious servants. All those insolent eunuchs shall be hunted out of the

palace; and all cooks, and jugglers, and dancers after them. A becoming frugality shall once more be enforced.

[*To* THEMISTIUS *and* MAMERTINUS.

You, my friends, shall aid me in this.—And you, Nevita, on whom, as a mark of special distinction, I bestow the title of general-in-chief,—you I depute to investigate how the offices of state have been administered under my predecessor, especially of late years. You may call in the aid of competent men, at your own choice, to decide with you in these affairs.

[*To the older courtiers and councillors.*

Of you I have no need. When my lamented kinsman, on his death-bed, appointed me his successor, he also bequeathed to me that justice which his long illness had prevented him from administering. Go home; and when you have given an account of yourselves, you may go whither you please.

URSULUS.

The Lord God uphold and shield you, my Emperor!

[*He bows, and goes out by the back, together with the older men.* NEVITA, THEMISTIUS, *and* MAMERTINUS, *with all the younger men, gather round the Emperor.*

NEVITA.

My august master, how can I sufficiently thank you for the mark of favour which you——

JULIAN.

No thanks. In these few days I have learnt to value your fidelity and judgment. I also commission you to draw up the despatch concerning the eastern envoys.

Word it so that the beneficent gods may find in it no reason for resentment against any of us.

NEVITA.

In both matters I will carry out my Emperor's will.
[*He goes out to the right.*

JULIAN.

And now, my faithful friends, now let us praise the immortal powers, who have shown us the right way.

THEMISTIUS.

The immortals, and their more than mortal favourite! What joy there will be throughout the empire, when it is known that you have dismissed those violent and rapacious men!

MAMERTINUS.

With what anxiety and impatient hope will the choice of their successors be awaited!

THEMISTIUS.

All the Greeks will exclaim with one voice: "Plato himself has taken the helm of state!"

MAMERTINUS.

No, no, worthy friend; all the Greeks will exclaim: "Plato's ideal is realised—'Only a god can rule over men!'"

THEMISTIUS.

I can but trust that the goodwill of the beneficent powers may follow Nevita. He has received a great

and difficult charge; I know little of him; but we must all hope that he may prove himself to be the right——

MAMERTINUS.

Undoubtedly; although there might perhaps be other men who——

THEMISTIUS.

Not that I would for a moment imply that your choice, oh peerless Emperor——

MAMERTINUS.

No, no; far from it!

THEMISTIUS.

But if it be an error to burn with zeal to serve a beloved master——

MAMERTINUS.

——then, in truth, you have more than one erring friend——

THEMISTIUS.

——even if you do not honour them, as you have honoured the thrice-fortunate Nevita——

MAMERTINUS.

——even if they have to be content without any visible token of your favour——

JULIAN.

We will leave no capable men unemployed or unrewarded. As regards you, Themistius, I appoint you

chief magistrate of this city of Constantinople; and you, Mamertinus, prepare to betake yourself to Rome during the coming year, to enter upon one of the vacant consulships.

THEMISTIUS.

My Emperor! I am dizzy with so much honour——

MAMERTINUS.

So high a distinction! Consul! Was ever consul so honoured as I? Was Lucius? Was Brutus? Was Publius Valerius? What were their honours to mine? They were chosen by the people, I by Julian!

A COURTIER.

Praise be to the Emperor, who makes justice his guide!

ANOTHER COURTIER.

Praise be to him, whose very name strikes terror to the barbarians!

THEMISTIUS.

Praise be to all the exalted gods, who have united in casting their enamoured eyes on one single man, so that when the day comes—distant may it be!—when he shall for the first time inflict pain on us by departing hence, this one man may be said to have cast Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and Alexander into the shade!

JULIAN.

There you touch the kernel of the matter, my Themistius! 'Tis to the gods that we must uplift our hands and hearts. I say this, not as instructing you, but merely to

remind you of what has so long been forgotten at this court. By no means would I seek to coerce any one. But can I be blamed because I would fain have others share in the sweet rapture which possesses me when I feel myself uplifted into communion with the immortals? Praise, praise to thee, vine-clad Dionysus! For it is chiefly thou who dost bring about such great and mysterious things. Depart now each to his task. I, for my part, have ordered a festal procession through the streets of the city. It shall be no mere revel for my courtiers, nor a banquet within four walls. The citizens shall be free to join me or to hold aloof; I will discern the pure from the impure, the pious from the misguided.

Oh Sun-King, shed light and beauty over the day! Oh Dionysus, let thy glory descend in floods upon our minds; fill our souls with thy sacred storm-wind; fill them till all trammels are burst asunder, and ecstasy enfranchised draws breath in dance and song!—Life, life, life in beauty!

[*He goes out hastily to the right. The courtiers break up into whispering groups, and gradually disperse.*

SCENE THIRD

A narrow street in Constantinople.

A great concourse of people, all looking in one direction down the street. Noise, singing, and the music of flutes and drums is heard at some distance.

A SHOEMAKER.

[*At his house-door, calls across the street.*] What's afoot, dear neighbour?

A SHOPKEEPER.

[*In the house opposite.*] They say 'tis some Syrian jugglers that have come to town.

A FRUIT-SELLER.

[*In the street.*] No, no, 'tis a band of Egyptians going around with apes and dromedaries.

EUNAPIUS THE BARBER.

[*Poorly clad, trying in vain to slip through the crowd.*] Make room, you fools! How the devil can any one chatter and play the fool on such a day of misfortune?

A WOMAN.

[*At a small window.*] Hist, hist, Eunapius! My comely master!

EUNAPIUS.

How dare you speak to me in the open street, you procuress?

THE WOMAN.

Slip in by the back way, sweet friend!

EUNAPIUS.

Fie upon you! Am I in the humour for folly——

THE WOMAN.

You shall soon be in the humour. Come, fair Eunapius; I had a consignment of fresh doves the day before yesterday——

EUNAPIUS.

Oh sinful world! [*Tries to pass.*] Make room, there, in Satan's name; let me pass!

HEKEBOLIUS.

[*Clad for a journey, and followed by a couple of laden slaves, comes from a side-street.*] Has the town turned into a madhouse? Every one seeks to outbellow his neighbour, and no one can tell me what is astir. Aha—Eunapius, my pious brother!

EUNAPIUS.

All hail to you, reverend sir! So you have come back to town?

HEKEBOLIUS.

This very moment;—I have consecrated the warm autumn months to quiet devotion, on my estate in Crete. And now pray tell me what is afoot here?

EUNAPIUS.

Confusion and disaster. The new Emperor——

HEKEBOLIUS.

Yes, yes, I have heard strange rumours——

EUNAPIUS.

The truth is ten times worse. All faithful servants are hunted out of the palace.

HEKEBOLIUS.

Is it possible?

EUNAPIUS.

Alackaday; I myself was the first——

HEKEBOLIUS.

Terrible! Then, perhaps, I too——?

EUNAPIUS.

Most certainly. All accounts are to be examined, all gifts resumed, all irregular perquisites——

HEKEBOLIUS.

[*Turning pale.*] God have mercy on us!

EUNAPIUS.

The Lord be praised, I have a good conscience!

HEKEBOLIUS.

I too, I too; but nevertheless—— Then no doubt it is true that the Emperor has sacrificed to Apollo and Fortuna?

EUNAPIUS.

Certainly; but who cares for such trifles?

HEKEBOLIUS.

Trifles? See you not, my short-sighted friend, that it is our faith, as good Christians, that he is persecuting?

EUNAPIUS.

What do you say? God's cross, is it possible?

WOMEN.

[*In the crowd.*] There they come!

A MAN.

[*On a housetop.*] I can see him!

OTHER VOICES.

Who comes? Who, who?

THE MAN ON THE HOUSETOP.

The Emperor Julian. He has vine-leaves in his hair.

PEOPLE IN THE STREET.

The Emperor!

EUNAPIUS.

The Emperor!

HEKEBOLIUS.

Come, come, my godly brother!

EUNAPIUS.

Let me go, sir. I am in no wise godly.

HEKEBOLIUS.

Not godly——?

EUNAPIUS.

Who dares accuse me of——? Do you want to ruin me? Godly? When was I godly? I once belonged to the sect of the Donatists; that was years and years ago.

Devil take the Donatists! [*He knocks at the window.*]
Hi, Barbara, Barbara; open the door, old she-cat!
[*The door is opened and he slips in.*

THE MULTITUDE.

There he is! There he comes!

HEKEBOLIUS.

All irregular perquisites——! Accounts examined!
Oh thunderbolt of disaster!

[*He slips away, followed by his two slaves.*

[*The Procession of Dionysus comes down the street. Flute-players go foremost; drunken men, some of them dressed as fauns and satyrs, dance to the measure. In the middle of the procession comes the* EMPEROR JULIAN, *riding on an ass, which is covered with a panther-skin; he is dressed as the god Dionysus, with a panther-skin over his shoulders, a wreath of vine-leaves round his head, in his hands a staff wreathed with green, and with a pine-cone fastened on its upper end. Half-naked, painted women and youths, dancers and jugglers, surround him; some carry wine-flagons and goblets, others beat tambourines, and move forward with wild leaps and antics.*

THE DANCERS.

[*Singing.*]

Potions of fire drain from goblets o'erflowing!
Potions of fire!
Lips deeply sipping,
Locks unguent-dripping,
Goat-haunches tripping,
Wine-God, we hail thee in rapturous quire!

THE WOMEN.

[*Singing.*]

Come, Bacchanalians, while noontide is glowing—
Come, do not flee us—
Plunge we in love-sports night blushes at knowing!
There rides Lyaeus,
Pard-borne, delivering!
Come, do not flee us:
Know, we are passionate; feel, we are quivering!
Leaping all, playing all,
Staggering and swaying all—
Come, do not flee us!

JULIAN.

Make room! Stand aside, Citizens! Reverently make way; not for us, but for him to whom we do honour!

A VOICE IN THE CROWD.

The Emperor in the company of mummers and harlots!

JULIAN.

The shame is yours, that I must content myself with such as these. Do you not blush to find more piety and zeal among these than among yourselves?

AN OLD MAN.

Christ enlighten you, sire!

JULIAN.

Aha, you are a Galilean! And you must put in your word? Did not your great Master sit at meat with sin-

ners? Did he not frequent houses that were held less than reputable? Answer me that.

EUNAPIUS.

[*Surrounded by girls, in the doorway of* BARBARA'S *house.*] Yes, answer, answer if you can, you fool!

JULIAN.

What,—are not you that barber whom——?

EUNAPIUS.

A new-made freeman, gracious Emperor! Make way, Bacchanalians; room for a brother!

[*He and the girls dance into the ranks of the Bacchanalians.*

JULIAN.

I like this well. Take example by this Greek, if you have a spark of your fathers' spirit left in you. And this is sorely needed, you citizens; for no divinity has been so much misunderstood—ay, even rendered ridiculous—as this ecstatic Dionysus, whom the Romans also call Bacchus. Think you he is the god of sots? Oh ignorant creatures, I pity you, if that is your thought. Who but he inspires poets and prophets with their miraculous gifts? I know that some attribute this function to Apollo, and certainly not without a show of reason; but in that case the whole matter must be regarded in quite another aspect,—as I could prove by many authorities. But this I will not debate with you in the open streets. This is neither the place nor the time. Ay, mock away! Make the sign of the cross! I see it! You would fain

whistle with your fingers; you would stone me, if you dared.—Oh, how I blush for this city, so sunk in barbarism that it knows no better than to cling to an ignorant Jew's deluded fantasies!—Forward! Stand aside,—do not block the way!

THE DANCERS.

There rides Lyaeus,
Pard-borne, delivering!

THE WOMEN.

Know, we are passionate; feel, we are quivering;
Come, do not flee us!

[*During the singing of the refrain the procession turns into a side-street; the crowd looks on in dumb astonishment.*

SCENE IV

The Emperor's library in the palace. Entrance door on the left; a lesser doorway, with a curtain before it, on the right.

The Chamberlain EUTHERIUS *enters from the left, followed by two servants, bearing carpets.*

EUTHERIUS.

[*Calling out to the right.*] Agilo, Agilo, warm rose-water! A bath for the Emperor.

[*He goes out to the right, with both servants.*

The EMPEROR JULIAN *enters hastily from the left. He still wears the panther-skin and the vine-leaves; in his hand is the green-wreathed staff. He paces the room once or twice, then flings the staff into a corner.*

JULIAN.

Was there beauty in this——?

Where were the white-bearded elders? Where the pure maidens, with the fillets on their brows, modest, and of seemly bearing, even in the rapture of the dance?

Out upon you, harlots!

[*He tears off the panther-skin, and casts it aside.*

Whither has beauty fled? When the Emperor bids her come forth again, will she not obey?

Out upon this stinking ribaldry!——

What faces! All the vices crying aloud in their distorted features. Ulcers on soul and body——

Faugh, faugh! A bath, Agilo! The stench chokes me.

THE BATH-SERVANT AGILO.

[*In the doorway to the right.*] The bath is prepared, gracious sire!

JULIAN.

The bath? Nay, let that be. What is the filth of the body compared with all the rest? Go!

[AGILO *goes out again. The Emperor stands some time in thought.*

The seer of Nazareth sat at meat among publicans and sinners.—

Where lies the gulf between that and this?——

[HEKEBOLIUS *enters from the left, and stops apprehensively at the door.*

JULIAN.

What would you, man?

HEKEBOLIUS.

[*Kneeling.*] Sire!

JULIAN.

Ah, what do I see? Hekebolius;—is it indeed you?

HEKEBOLIUS.

The same, and yet another.

JULIAN.

My old teacher. What would you have? Stand up!

HEKEBOLIUS.

No, no, let me lie. And take it not ill that I presume on my former right of entrance to your presence.

JULIAN.

[*Coldly.*] I asked you what you would have?

HEKEBOLIUS.

"My old teacher," you said. Oh that I could cast the veil of oblivion over those times!

JULIAN.

[*As before.*] I understand. You mean that——

HEKEBOLIUS.

Oh that I could sink into the earth, and hide the shame I feel! See, see,—here I lie at your feet, a man whose hair is growing grey—a man who has pored and pondered all his days, and has to confess at last that he has gone astray, and led his beloved pupil into error!

JULIAN.

What would you have me understand by that?

HEKEBOLIUS.

You called me your old teacher. See, here I lie in the dust before you, looking up to you with wonder, and calling you my new teacher.

JULIAN.

Rise Hekebolius!

HEKEBOLIUS.

[*Rising.*] You shall hear everything, sire, and judge me according to your righteousness.—When you were gone, life at your august predecessor's court became almost intolerable to me. I know not whether you have heard that I was promoted to be the Empress's reader and almoner. But ah, could posts of honour console me for the loss of my Julian! I could scarce endure to see how men who made great show of outward virtue accepted gifts and bribes of every kind. I grew to hate this daily intercourse with greedy sycophants, whose advocacy was at the beck of any one who could pay down sounding gold for sounding words. Oh my Emperor, you do not know what went on here——!

JULIAN.

I know, I know.

HEKEBOLIUS.

A frugal life in retirement allured me. As often as I might, I withdrew to Crete, to my modest Tusculum—my little country house,—where virtue did not seem to

have utterly forsaken the world. There I have been living this summer as well; meditating upon human life and heavenly truths.

JULIAN.

Happy Hekebolius!

HEKEBOLIUS.

Then the rumour of all your marvellous exploits reached Crete——

JULIAN.

Ah!

HEKEBOLIUS.

I asked myself: Is he more than mortal, this peerless youth? Under whose protection does he stand? Is it thus that the God of the Christians is wont to manifest his power——?

JULIAN.

[*In rapt attention.*] Well; well!

HEKEBOLIUS.

I set myself to search once more the writings of the ancients. Light after light dawned upon me——; oh, to have to confess this!

JULIAN.

Speak out—I beseech you!

HEKEBOLIUS.

[*Falling on his knees.*] Punish me according to your righteousness, sire; but renounce your youthful errors

on things divine! Yes, most gracious Emperor, you are entangled in error, and I—oh, I marvel that the shame does not kill me—I, I have helped to lead you astray——

JULIAN.

[*With outstretched arms.*] Come to my closest embrace!

HEKEBOLIUS.

Oh, I entreat you, show gratitude to the immortal gods, whose darling you are! And if you cannot, then punish me because I do it in your stead——

JULIAN.

Come, come to my open arms, I tell you!
[*He lifts him up, presses him in his arms, and kisses him.*
My Hekebolius! What a great and unlooked-for joy!

HEKEBOLIUS.

Sire, how am I to understand this?

JULIAN.

Oh, then you do not know——? When came you to the city?

HEKEBOLIUS.

I landed an hour ago.

JULIAN.

And hurried hither at once?

HEKEBOLIUS.

On the wings of anxiety and remorse, sire!

JULIAN.

And you have spoken to no one?

HEKEBOLIUS.

No, no, I have spoken to no one; but——?

JULIAN.

Oh, then you cannot have heard——

[*He embraces him again.*

My Hekebolius, listen and know! I too, like you, have cast off the yoke of error. The immortal Sun-King, to whom we mortals owe so much, I have restored to his ancient state; Fortuna has received her offering from my humble hands; and if, at this moment, you find me weary and somewhat unstrung, it is because I have but now been celebrating a festival in honour of the divine Dionysus.

HEKEBOLIUS.

I hear, and am amazed!

JULIAN.

See,—the garland is still in my hair. Amid the joyous acclaim of the multitude—yes, I may call it a multitude——

HEKEBOLIUS.

And I did not even dream of such great things!

JULIAN.

Now we will gather around us all friends of truth, and lovers of wisdom, all seemly and reverent worshippers of the gods;—there are already some—not very many——

The physician CAESARIUS, *accompanied by several officials and notables of the former court, enters from the left.*

JULIAN.

Ah, here we have the good Caesarius,—numerously accompanied, and with a face that betokens urgent business.

CAESARIUS.

Most gracious Emperor, will you permit your servant to ask a question, in his own name, and that of these much disquieted men?

JULIAN.

Ask, my dearest Caesarius! Are you not my beloved Gregory's brother? Ask, ask!

CAESARIUS.

Tell me, then, sire——[*He observes* HEKEBOLIUS.] What do I see! Hekebolius here?

JULIAN.

Newly returned——

CAESARIUS.

[*Trying to draw back.*] Then I beg leave to defer——

JULIAN.

No, no, my Caesarius; this friend may hear everything.

CAESARIUS.

Friend, say you? Oh my Emperor, then you have not ordered these imprisonments?

JULIAN.

What mean you?

CAESARIUS.

Do you not know? Nevita—the general-in-chief, as he now calls himself—is instituting prosecutions under pretext of your authority, against all the trusted servants of your predecessor.

JULIAN.

Investigations, highly necessary investigations, my Caesarius!

CAESARIUS.

Oh sire, forbid him to go about it so harshly. The book-keeper Pentadius is being hunted down by soldiers; and likewise a certain captain of Prætorians, whose name you have forbidden us to mention; you know whom I mean, sire—that unhappy man who is already, with his whole household, in hiding for fear of you.

JULIAN.

You do not know this man. In Gaul, he cherished the most audacious designs.

CAESARIUS.

That may be; but now he is harmless. And not he alone is threatened with destruction; the treasurer, Ursulus, is imprisoned——

JULIAN.

Ah, Ursulus? So that has been found needful.

CAESARIUS.

Needful? Could t h a t be needful, sire. Think of Ursulus, that stainless old man—that man before whose word high and low bend in reverence——

JULIAN.

A man utterly devoid of judgment, I tell you! Ursulus is a prodigal, who, without any demur, has gorged the rapacity of the court servants. And besides, he is useless in affairs of state. I have found that to my cost. I could never trust him to receive the emissaries of foreign princes.

CAESARIUS.

And yet we beg you, sire—all who are here present—to be magnanimous, both to Ursulus and to the others.

JULIAN.

Who are the others?

CAESARIUS.

Too many, I fear. I will only name the under-treasurer, Evagrius, the late chamberlain, Saturninus, the supreme judge, Cyrenus, and——

JULIAN.

Why do you stop?

CAESARIUS.

[*With hesitation.*] Sire—the late Empress's reader, Hekebolius, is also among the accused.

JULIAN.

What!

HEKEBOLIUS.

I? Impossible!

CAESARIUS.

Accused of having accepted bribes from unworthy office-seekers——

JULIAN.

Hekebolius accused of that——? A man like Hekebolius——?

HEKEBOLIUS.

What shameful slander! Oh Christ—I mean to say—oh heavenly divinities!

CAESARIUS.

Ah!

JULIAN.

What mean you?

CAESARIUS.

[*Coldly.*] Nothing, most gracious Emperor!

JULIAN.

Caesarius!

CAESARIUS.

Yes, my august master!

JULIAN.

Not master; call me your friend.

CAESARIUS.

Dare a Christian call you so?

JULIAN.

I pray you banish such thoughts, Caesarius! You must not believe that of me. How can I help all these accused men being Christians? Does it not merely show that the Christians have contrived to seize all the lucrative posts? And can the Emperor suffer the most important offices of the state to be badly administered?

[*To the others.*

You surely do not think that it is your creed which has kindled my wrath against dishonest officials? I call all the gods to witness that I will permit no proceedings against you Christians that are not consonant with law and justice, nor will I suffer any one to do you wrong. You, or at any rate many of you, are pious in your way, since you too adore that Lord who is all-powerful, and who rules over the whole visible world.—Oh, my Caesarius, is it not he whom I also adore, though under other names?

CAESARIUS.

Suffer me, gracious Emperor——

JULIAN.

Moreover, it is my intention to show clemency wherever it is fit that I should do so. As to Hekebolius, his secret enemies must not imagine that they will be suffered to injure him by tale-bearing or any other sort of paltry intrigue.

HEKEBOLIUS.

My Emperor! My shield and my defence!

JULIAN.

Nor is it my will that all the minor court servants should be unmercifully deprived of their subsistence. I have specially in mind that barber whom I dismissed. I am sorry for it. The man may remain. He seemed to me one who understood his business thoroughly. All honour to such people! So far I can go, my Caesarius, but no further. I cannot interfere on behalf of Ursulus. I must act so that the blind, and yet so keen-eyed, Goddess of Justice may have no reason to knit her brows over a mortal to whom she has confided so great a responsibility.

CAESARIUS.

After this, I have not a word more to say for those unfortunates. I only crave permission to leave the court and city.

JULIAN.

Would you leave me?

CAESARIUS.

Yes, most gracious Emperor!

JULIAN.

You are stiff-necked, like your brother.

CAESARIUS.

The new order of things gives me much to reflect upon.

JULIAN.

I had great designs for you Caesarius! It would be a great joy to me, if you could renounce your errors. Can you not?

CAESARIUS.

God knows what I might have done a month ago;—now I cannot.

JULIAN.

A marriage into one of the most powerful families should stand open to you. Will you not bethink you?

CAESARIUS.

No, most gracious lord.

JULIAN.

A man like you could quickly mount from step to step. Caesarius, is it not possible that you can give me your aid in furthering the new order of things?

CAESARIUS.

No, most gracious lord!

JULIAN.

I do not mean here, but in other places. It is my intention to depart from here. Constantinople is very unpleasing to me; you Galileans have spoiled it for me in every way. I shall go to Antioch; there I shall find better soil to work upon. I thought you would accompany me. Will you not, Caesarius?

CAESARIUS.

Most gracious lord, I too am bound for the east; but I will go alone.

JULIAN.

And what will you do there?

CAESARIUS.

Visit my old father; help Gregory to strengthen him for the coming struggle.

JULIAN.

Go!

CAESARIUS.

Farewell, my Emperor!

JULIAN.

Happy father, with such unhappy sons!

[*He makes a gesture with his hand;* CAESARIUS *and those with him bow low, and go out to the left.*

HEKEBOLIUS.

What reckless and most unseemly defiance!

JULIAN.

My heart is wounded to the quick by this and many other things. You, my Hekebolius, shall accompany me. The ground burns beneath my feet in this poisoned Galilean city! I will write to those philosophers, Kytron and Priscus, who have won so great fame of late years. Maximus I expect every day; he shall go with us.—I tell you there are joyful days of victory awaiting us, Hekebolius! In Antioch, my friend,—there we shall meet the incomparable Libanius,—and there we are nearer

Helios at his rising. Oh, this irresistible yearning towards the Sun-King——!

HEKEBOLIUS.

Yes, yes, yes——!

JULIAN.

[*Embracing him.*] My Hekebolius!—Wisdom; light; beauty!

ACT SECOND

SCENE FIRST

A spacious vestibule in the Emperor's Palace, at Antioch. An open entrance in the background; on the left is a door, leading into the inner rooms.

On a raised seat in the foreground, to the right, sits the EMPEROR JULIAN, *surrounded by his court. Judges, Orators, Poets, and Teachers, among them* HEKEBOLIUS, *sit on lower seats around him. Leaning against the wall near the entrance stands* A MAN, *dressed as a Christian Priest; he hides his face in his hands, and seems rapt in prayer. A great gathering of citizens fills the hall. Guards at the entrance, and at the door on the left.*

JULIAN.

[*Addressing the assemblage.*] So great success have the gods vouchsafed me. Hardly a single city have I approached on my journey, whence whole troops of Galileans have not streamed forth to meet me on the road, lamenting their errors, and placing themselves under the protection of the divine powers. Compared with this, what signifies the senseless behaviour of the scoffers? May not the scoffers be likened to dogs, who in their ignorance yelp at the moon? Yet I will not deny that I have learned with indignation that some inhabitants of this city have spoken scornfully of the rule of life which I have enjoined on the priests of Cybele, the good goddess.

Ought not reverence for so exalted a divinity to protect her servants from mockery? I say to those foolhardy men: Are ye barbarians, since ye know not who Cybele is? Must I solemnly remind you how, when the power of Rome was so gravely threatened by that Punic commander, whose grave I saw not long since in Libyssa, the Cumaean Sybil counselled that the statue of Cybele should be taken from the temple in Pessinus, and brought to Rome? As to the priests' way of life, some have wondered that they should be forbidden to eat roots, and everything that grows along the earth, while they are allowed to partake of upward-growing herbs and fruits. Oh, how dense is your ignorance—I pity you if you cannot understand this! Can the spirit of man find nourishment in that which creeps along the ground? Does not the soul live by all that yearns upward, towards heaven and the sun? I will not enter more largely into these matters to-day. What remains to be said you shall learn from a treatise I am composing during my sleepless nights, which I hope will shortly be recited both in the lecture-halls and on the market-places. [*He rises.*

And with this, my friends, if no one has anything further to bring forward——

A Citizen.

[*Pressing to the front.*] Oh most gracious Emperor, let me not go unheard!

Julian.

[*Sitting down again.*] Surely not, my friend. Who are you?

The Citizen.

I am Medon, the Corn Merchant. Oh, if my love for you, exalted and divine Emperor——

JULIAN.

Come to your case, man!

MEDON.

I have a neighbour, Alites, who for many years has done me every imaginable injury; for he, too, is a dealer in corn, and takes the bread out of my mouth in the most shameful way——

JULIAN.

Aha, my good Medon; yet you look not ill-fed.

MEDON.

Nor is that the matter, most gracious Emperor! Oh, by the august gods, whom every day I learn to love and praise more highly—his affronts to me I could overlook; but what I cannot suffer——

JULIAN.

He surely does not insult the gods?

MEDON.

He does what is worse,—or at least equally shameless; he—oh, I scarce know whether my indignation will permit me to utter it,—he insults you yourself, most gracious Emperor!

JULIAN.

Indeed? In what words?

MEDON.

Not in words, but worse—in act.

JULIAN.

Then in what act?

MEDON.

He wears a purple robe——

JULIAN.

A purple robe? Oho, that is bold.

MEDON.

Oh, great wing-footed Mercury, when I think how he would have paid for that robe in your predecessor's time! And this garment of vainglory I have daily before my eyes——

JULIAN.

This garment, bought with money that might have been yours——

MEDON.

Oh most gracious Emperor,—punish his audacity; let him be expelled the city; my love for our great and august ruler will not suffer me to remain a witness of such shameless arrogance.

JULIAN.

Tell me, good Medon, what manner of clothes does Alites wear, besides the purple cloak?

MEDON.

Truly I cannot call to mind, sire; ordinary clothes, I think; I have only remarked the purple cloak.

JULIAN.

A purple cloak, then, and untanned sandals——?

MEDON.

Yes, sire; it looks as ludicrous as it is audacious.

JULIAN.

We must remedy this, Medon!

MEDON.

[*Joyfully.*] Ah, most gracious Emperor——

JULIAN.

Come early to-morrow to the palace——

MEDON.

[*Still more delighted.*] I will come very early, most gracious Emperor!

JULIAN.

Give your name to my Chamberlain——

MEDON.

Yes, yes, my most gracious Emperor!

JULIAN.

You will receive from him a pair of purple shoes, embroidered with gold——

MEDON.

Ah, my most generous lord and Emperor!

JULIAN.

These shoes you will take to Alites, place them on his feet, and say that henceforth he must not fail to put them on, whenever he would walk abroad by daylight in his purple cloak——

MEDON.

Oh!

JULIAN.

——and, that done, you may tell him from me, that he is a fool if he thinks himself honoured by a purple robe, having not the power of the purple.—Go; and come for the shoes to-morrow!

[*The Corn Merchant slinks away, amid the laughter of the citizens; the Courtiers, Orators, Poets, and the rest clap their hands, with loud exclamations of approval.*

ANOTHER CITIZEN.

[*Stepping forward from the crowd.*] Praised be the Emperor's justice! Oh how richly this envious corn-miser deserves his punishment! Oh hear me, and let your favour——

JULIAN.

Aha; methinks I know that face. Were not you one of those who shouted before my chariot as I drove into the city?

THE CITIZEN.

None shouted louder than I, incomparable Emperor! I am Malchus, the tax-gatherer. Ah, grant me your aid!

I am engaged in a law-suit with an evil and grasping man——

JULIAN.

And therefore you come to me? Are there not judges——?

MALCHUS.

The affair is somewhat involved, noble Emperor. It concerns a field, which I leased to this bad man, having bought it seven years since, when part of the domain belonging to the Apostles' Church was sold.

JULIAN.

So, so; church property, then?

MALCHUS.

Honestly purchased; but now this man denies either to pay me rent, or to give up the property, under pretext that this field once belonged to the temple of Apollo, and, as he declares, was unlawfully confiscated many years ago.

JULIAN.

Tell me, Malchus,—you seem to be a follower of the Galilean?

MALCHUS.

Most gracious Emperor, 'tis an old tradition in our family to acknowledge Christ.

JULIAN.

And this you say openly, without fear?

MALCHUS.

My adversary is bolder than I, sire! He goes in and out, as before; he fled not the city when he heard of your approach.

JULIAN.

Fled not? And why should he flee, this man who stands out for the rights of the gods?

MALCHUS.

Most gracious Emperor, you have doubtless heard of the book-keeper, Thalassius?

JULIAN.

What! That Thalassius who, to ingratiate himself with my predecessor, whilst I was being slandered and menaced in Gaul, proposed, here in Antioch, in the open market-place, that the citizens should petition the Emperor to send them Julian Caesar's head!

MALCHUS.

Sire, it is this, your deadly foe, who is wronging me.

JULIAN.

Truly, Malchus, I have as great ground of complaint against this man as you have.

MALCHUS.

Tenfold greater, my gracious Emperor?

JULIAN.

What think you? Shall we two combine our quarrels, and prosecute him together?

MALCHUS.

Oh, what exceeding grace! Oh tenfold happiness!

JULIAN.

Oh tenfold foolishness! Thalassius goes in and out as before, you say? He has not fled the city at my approach. Thalassius knows me better than you. Away with you, man! When I indict Thalassius for my head, you may indict him for your field.

MALCHUS.

[*Wringing his hands.*] Oh tenfold misery!

[*He goes out by the back; the assembly again applauds the Emperor.*

JULIAN.

That is well, my friends; rejoice that I have succeeded in making a not altogether unworthy beginning to this day which is specially dedicate to the feast of the radiant Apollo. For is it not worthy of a philosopher to overlook affronts against himself, whilst he sternly chastises wrongs done to the immortal gods? I do not recall whether that crowned cultivator of learning, Marcus Aurelius, was ever in like case; but if he was, we must hope that he did not act quite unlike me, who hold it an honour to follow humbly in his footsteps.

Let this serve as a clue for your future guidance. In the palace, in the market-place, even in the theatre—did I

not loathe to enter such a place of folly—it is fit that you should greet me with acclamation and joyful applause. Such homage, I know, was well received both by the Macedonian Alexander and by Julius Caesar, men who were also permitted by the Goddess of Fortune to outshine other mortals in glory.

But when you see me entering a temple, that is another affair. Then I desire you to be silent, or direct your plaudits to the gods, and not to me, as I advance with bent head and downcast eyes. And above all, I trust you will be heedful of this to-day, when I am to sacrifice to so transcendent and mighty a divinity as he whom we know by the name of the Sun-King, and who seems even greater in our eyes when we reflect that he is the same whom certain oriental peoples call Mithra.

And with this—if no one has more to say——

THE PRIEST AT THE DOOR.

[*Draws himself up.*] In the name of the Lord God!

JULIAN.

Who speaks?

THE PRIEST.

A servant of God and of the Emperor.

JULIAN.

Approach. What would you?

THE PRIEST.

I would speak to your heart and to your conscience.

JULIAN.

[*Springing up.*] What voice was that! What do I see! In spite of beard and habit——! Gregory!

THE PRIEST.

Yes, my august master!

JULIAN.

Gregory! Gregory of Nazianzus!

GREGORY.

Yes, gracious Emperor!

JULIAN.

[*Has descended and grasped his hands; he now looks long at him.*] A little older; browner; broader. No; 'twas only at the first glance; now you are the same as ever.

GREGORY.

Oh that it were so with you, sire!

JULIAN.

Athens. That night in the portico. No man has lain so near my heart as you.

GREGORY.

Your heart? Ah, Emperor, you have torn out of your heart a better friend than I.

JULIAN.

You mean Basil?

GREGORY.

I mean a greater than Basil.

JULIAN.

[*Glooming.*] Ah! So that is what you come to tell me? And in that habit——

GREGORY.

I did not choose this habit, sire!

JULIAN.

Not you? Who then?

GREGORY.

He who is greater than the Emperor.

JULIAN.

I know your Galilean phrases. For the sake of our friendship, spare me them.

GREGORY.

Let me, then, begin by telling you how it is that you see me here, ordained a priest of the church you are persecuting.

JULIAN.

[*With a sharp look.*] Persecuting!

[*He ascends the daïs again and sits down.*

Now speak on.

GREGORY.

You know what were my thoughts of things divine, during our happy comradeship in Athens. But then it

was far from my purpose to renounce the joys of life. Neither ambition nor the thirst for riches, I can truly say, has ever tempted me; yet I should scarce tell the truth if I denied that my eye and my mind dwelt wonderingly on all the glories which the old learning and art of Greece revealed to me. The wranglings and petty schisms in our church afflicted me deeply; but I took no part in them; I served my countrymen in temporal things; nothing more——

Then came tidings from Constantinople. It was said that Constantius had died of terror at your proceedings, and had declared you his heir. Heralded by the renown of your victories, and received as a superhuman being, you, the hero of Gaul and Germany, had ascended the throne of Constantine without striking a blow. The earth lay at your feet.

Then came further tidings. The lord of earth was girding himself up to war against the Lord of heaven——

JULIAN.

Gregory, what do you presume——!

GREGORY.

The lord of the body was girding himself up to war against the Lord of the soul. I stand here before you in bodily fear and trembling; but I dare not lie. Will you hear the truth, or shall I be silent?

JULIAN.

Say on, Gregory!

GREGORY.

What have not my fellow Christians already suffered during these few months? How many sentences of death

have been passed, and executed in the cruellest fashion? Gaudentius, the state secretary; Artemius, the former governor of Egypt; the two tribunes, Romanus and Vincentius——

JULIAN.

You know not what you speak of. I tell you, the Goddess of Justice would have wept had those traitors escaped with their lives.

GREGORY.

That may be, my Emperor; but I tell you that one sentence of death has been passed which the God of Justice can never forgive you. Ursulus! The man who stood your friend in times of need! Ursulus who, at the risk of his own life, supplied you with money in Gaul! Ursulus, whose sole crime was his Christian faith and his sincerity——

JULIAN.

Ah, this you have from your brother, Caesarius!

GREGORY.

Punish me, sire; but spare my brother.

JULIAN.

You well know that you risk nothing, Gregory! Besides, I will grant you that Nevita acted too harshly.

GREGORY.

Ay, that barbarian, who tries in vain to hide his origin under a Greek veneer——!

JULIAN.

Nevita is zealous in his duty, and I cannot myself be everywhere. For Ursulus I have mourned sincerely, and I deeply deplore that neither time nor circumstances allowed me to examine into his case myself. I should certainly have spared him, Gregory! I have thought, too, of restoring to his heirs any property he has left behind.

GREGORY.

Great Emperor, you owe me no reckoning for your acts. I only wished to tell you that all these tidings fell like thunderbolts in Caesarea and Nazianzus, and the other Cappadocian cities. How shall I describe their effect! Our internal wranglings were silenced by the common danger. Many rotten branches of the Church fell away; but in many indifferent hearts the light of the Lord was kindled with a fervour before undreamt-of. Meanwhile oppression overtook God's people. The heathen —I mean, my Emperor, those whom *I* call heathen —began to threaten, to injure, to persecute us——

JULIAN.

Retaliation,—retaliation, Gregory!

GREGORY.

Far be it from me to justify all that my fellow Christians may have done in their excessive zeal for the cause of the Church. But you, who are so enlightened, and have power over all alike, cannot permit the living to suffer for the faults of the dead. Yet so it has been in Cappadocia. The enemies of the Christians, few in number, but thirsting after gain, and burning with eager-

ness to ingratiate themselves with the new officials, have awakened fear and perturbation among the people both in town and country.

I am not thinking chiefly of the insults we have had to suffer, nor of the infringements of our just rights of property, to which we have been constantly exposed of late. What most grieves me and all my earnest brethren, is the peril to souls. Many are not firm-rooted in the faith, and cannot quite shake off the care for earthly goods. The harsh treatment which has now to be endured by all who bear the name of Christian has already led to more than one apostasy. Sire, this is soul-robbery from God's kingdom.

JULIAN.

Oh, my wise Gregory,—how can you talk so? I wonder at you? Should you not rather, as a good Galilean, rejoice that your community is rid of such men?

GREGORY.

Gracious Emperor, I am not of that opinion. I have myself been indifferent in the faith, and I look upon all such as sick men, who are not past cure, so long as they remain in the bosom of the Church. So, too, thought our little congregation at Nazianzus. Brethren and sisters, in deep distress, assembled to take counsel against the perils of the time. They were joined by delegates from Caesarea and other cities. My father is infirm, and—as he owns with sorrow—does not possess the steadfast, immovable will which, in these troublous times, is needful for him who sits in the bishop's chair. The assembly determined that a younger man should be chosen as his helper, to hold the Lord's flock together.

The choice fell on me.

JULIAN.

Ah!

GREGORY.

I was then away on a journey. But in my absence, and without consulting me, my father ordained me a priest and sent me the priestly habit.

These tidings reached me in Tiberina, at my country house, where I was passing some days with my brother and with the friend of my youth, Basil of Caesarea.

Sire—had my sentence of death been read to me, it could not have appalled me more than this.

I a priest! I wished it, and I wished it not. I felt it must be—and yet my courage failed. I wrestled with God the Lord, as the patriarch wrestled with him in the days of the old covenant. What passed in my soul during the night which followed, I cannot tell. But this I know that, ere the cock crew, I talked face to face with the Crucified One.—Then I was his.

JULIAN.

Folly, folly; I know those dreams.

GREGORY.

On my homeward journey I passed through Caesarea. Oh, what misery met me there! I found the town full of fugitive country people, who had forsaken house and home because the drought had burnt up their crops, and laid all the vineyards and olive-gardens desolate. To escape starvation they had fled to the starving. There they lay—men, women, and children—in heaps along the walls of the houses; fever shook them, famine gnawed their entrails. What had Caesarea to offer them—that

impoverished, unhappy town, as yet but half rebuilt after the great earthquake of two years ago. And in the midst of this, amid scorching heat and frequent earthquake-shocks, we had to see ungodly festivals going on day and night. The ruined altars were hastily rebuilt; the blood of sacrifices ran in streams; mummers and harlots paraded the streets with dance and song.

Sire—can you wonder that my much-tried brethren thought they saw in the visitation that had come upon them a judgment of heaven because they had so long tolerated heathenism and its scandalous symbols in their midst?

JULIAN.

What symbols do you mean?

GREGORY.

The cry of the terror-stricken and fevered multitude rose ever higher; they demanded that the rulers of the city should give a palpable witness for Christ by ordering the destruction of what still remains of the former glory of heathendom in Caesarea.

JULIAN.

You cannot mean to say that——?

GREGORY.

The magistrates of the city called a meeting, where I too was present. You know, most gracious Emperor, that all temples are the property of the city; so that the citizens have the right to dispose of them at their own free will.

JULIAN.

Well, well; what if it were so?

GREGORY.

In that terrible earthquake that ravaged Caesarea two years ago, all the temples but one were destroyed.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes; the temple of Fortuna.

GREGORY.

At the meeting whereof I speak, the congregation determined to complete God's work of judgment, in testimony that they would trust wholly and solely to him, and no longer tolerate the abomination in their midst.

JULIAN.

[*Hoarsely.*] Gregory,—once my friend—do you hold your life dear?

GREGORY.

This resolution I did not myself approve, but almost all voices were in favour of it. But as we feared that the matter might be represented to you falsely, and might, perhaps, incense you against the city, it was determined to send a man hither to announce to you what we have resolved, and what will presently happen.

Great ruler,—no one else was found willing to undertake the task. It fell perforce to me. Therefore it is, sire, that I stand here before you in all humility, to announce that we Christians in Caesarea have resolved that

the temple where the heathen in bygone days worshipped a false deity, under the name of Fortuna, shall be pulled down and levelled with the ground.

JULIAN.

[*Springing up.*] And I must listen to this with my own ears. One single man dares to tell me such unheard-of things!

COURTIERS, ORATORS, AND POETS.

O pious Emperor, do not suffer it! Punish this audacious man

HEKEBOLIUS.

He is distraught, sire! Let him go. See,—the frenzy glitters in his eyes.

JULIAN.

Ay, it may well be called madness. But 'tis more than madness. To dream of pulling down that excellent temple, dedicated to a no less excellent divinity! Is it not to the favour of this very goddess that I ascribe my achievements, the fame of which has reached the remotest nations? Were I to suffer this, how could I ever again hope for victory or prosperity?—Gregory, I command you to return to Caesarea and give the citizens to understand that I forbid this outrage.

GREGORY.

Impossible, sire! The matter has come to such a pass that we have to choose between the fear of man and obedience to God. We cannot draw back.

JULIAN.

Then you shall feel how far the Emperor's arm can stretch!

GREGORY.

The Emperor's arm is mighty in earthly things; and I, like others, tremble under it.

JULIAN.

Show it, then, in deeds! Ah, you Galileans, you reckon upon my long-suffering. Do not trust to it; for truly——

A noise at the entrance. The barber, EUNAPIUS, *followed by several citizens, rushes in.*

JULIAN.

What is this? Eunapius, what has befallen you?

EUNAPIUS.

Oh that my eyes should see such a sight!

JULIAN.

What sight have you seen?

EUNAPIUS.

Behold, most gracious Emperor, I come bleeding and bruised, yet happy to be the first to call down your wrath——

JULIAN.

Speak, man;—who has beaten you?

EUNAPIUS.

Permit me, sire, to lay my complaint before you.
I went forth from the town this morning to visit the little temple of Venus which you have lately restored. When I came thither, the music of flutes and singing greeted my ears. Women were dancing gracefully in the outer court, and within I found the whole space filled with a rapturous crowd, while at the altar priests were offering up the sacrifices you have ordained.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes; and then——?

EUNAPIUS.

Scarcely had I had time to turn my thoughts in devotion toward that enchanting goddess, whom I especially revere and worship,—when a great crowd of young men forced their way into the temple——

JULIAN.

Not Galileans?

EUNAPIUS.

Yes, sire,—Galileans.

JULIAN.

Ah!

EUNAPIUS.

What a scene followed! Weeping under the assailants' insults and blows, the dancing-girls fled from the outer court to us within. The Galileans fell upon us all, belaboured us and affronted us in the most shameful manner.

JULIAN.

[*Descending from his throne.*] Wait, wait.

EUNAPIUS.

Alas, would that their violence had fallen on us alone! But the madmen went further. Yes, gracious Emperor —in one word, the altar is overthrown, the statue of the goddess dashed to pieces, the entrails of the sacrifices cast out to the dogs——

JULIAN.

[*Pacing up and down.*] Wait, wait, wait!

GREGORY.

Sire, this one man's word is not enough——

JULIAN.

Be silent!

[*To* EUNAPIUS.] Did you know any of the sacrilegious crew?

EUNAPIUS.

Not I, sire; but these citizens knew many of them.

JULIAN.

Take a guard with you. Seize as many of the wretches as you can. Cast them into prison. The prisoners shall give up the names of the rest; and when I have them all in my power——

GREGORY.

What then, sire?

JULIAN.

Ask the executioner. Both you and the citizens of Caesarea shall be taught what you have to expect if, in your Galilean obstinacy, you should abide by your resolve.

[*The Emperor goes out in great wrath, to the left;* EUNAPIUS *and his witnesses retire with the watch; the others disperse.*

SCENE SECOND

A market-place in Antioch. In front, on the right, a street debouches into the market; to the left, at the back, there is a view into a narrow and crooked street. A great concourse of people fills the market. Hucksters cry their wares. In several places the townspeople have gathered into clusters, talking eagerly.

A CITIZEN.

Good God of heaven, when did this misfortune happen?

ANOTHER CITIZEN.

This morning, I tell you; quite early this morning.

PHOCION THE DYER.

[*Who has entered from the street on the right.*] My good man, do you think it is fitting to call this a misfortune? I call it a crime, and a most audacious crime to boot.

THE SECOND CITIZEN.

Yes, yes; that is quite true; it was a most audacious thing to do.

PHOCION.

Only think—of course it is the outrage on the temple of Venus you are talking of? Only think of their choosing a time when the Emperor was in the city——! And this day, too, of all others—a day——

A THIRD CITIZEN.

[*Drawing near.*] Tell me, good friend, what is the matter——?

PHOCION.

This day of all others, I say, when our august ruler is himself to officiate at the feast of Apollo.

THE THIRD CITIZEN.

Yes, I know that; but why are they taking these Christians to prison?

PHOCION.

What? Are they taking them to prison? Have they really caught them? [*Loud shrieks are heard.*
Hush; what is that? Yes, by the gods, I believe they have them!

[*An* OLD WOMAN, *much agitated, and with dishevelled hair, makes her way through the crowd; she is beset by other women, who in vain seek to restrain her.*

THE OLD WOMAN.

I will not be held back! He is my only son, the child of my old age! Let me go; let me go! Can no one tell me where I can find the Emperor?

PHOCION.

What would you with the Emperor, old mother?

THE OLD WOMAN.

I would have my son again. Help me! My son! Hilarion! Oh, they have taken him from me! They burst into our house—and then they took him away!

ONE OF THE CITIZENS.

[*To* PHOCION.] Who is this woman?

PHOCION.

What? Know you not the widow Publia,—the psalm-singer?

CITIZEN.

Ah, yes, yes, yes!

PUBLIA.

Hilarion! my child! What will they do to him? Ah, Phocion,—are you there? God be praised for sending me a Christian brother——!

PHOCION.

Hush, hush, be quiet; do not scream so loud; the Emperor is coming.

PUBLIA.

Oh, this ungodly Emperor! The Lord of Wrath is visiting his sins upon us; famine ravages the land; the earth trembles beneath our feet!

[*A detachment of soldiers enters by the street on the right.*

THE COMMANDER OF THE DETACHMENT.

Stand aside; make room here!

PUBLIA.

Oh come, good Phocion;—help me, for our friendship's and our fellowship's sake——

PHOCION.

Are you mad, woman? I do not know you.

PUBLIA.

What? You do not know me? Are you not Phocion the dyer? Are you not the son of——?

PHOCION.

I am not the son of anybody. Get you gone, woman! You are mad! I do not know you; I have never seen you. [*He hastens in among the crowd.*

A SUBALTERN.

[*With soldiers, from the right.*] Clear the way here!

[*The soldiers force the multitude back towards the houses. Old* PUBLIA *faints in the arms of the women on the left. All gaze expectantly down the street.*

PHOCION.

[*In a knot of people behind the guard, to the right.*] Yes, by the Sun-God, there he comes, the blessed Emperor!

A SOLDIER.

Do not push so, behind there!

PHOCION.

Can you see him? The man with the white fillet round his brow, that is the Emperor.

A CITIZEN.

The man all in white?

PHOCION.

Yes, yes, that is he.

THE CITIZEN.

Why is he dressed in white?

PHOCION.

Doubtless because of the heat; or,—no, stop,—I think it is as the sacrificing priest that he——

A SECOND CITIZEN.

Will the Emperor himself offer the sacrifice?

PHOCION.

Yes, the Emperor Julian does everything himself.

A THIRD CITIZEN.

He does not look so powerful as the Emperor Constantius.

PHOCION.

I think he does. He is not so tall as the late Emperor; but his arms are longer. And then his glance—oh my friends——! You cannot see it just now; his eyes are modestly lowered as he walks. Yes, modest he is, I can tell you. He has no eye for women. I dare swear that since his wife's death he has but seldom——; you see, he writes the whole night. That is why his fingers are often as black as a dyer's; just like mine; for I am a dyer. I can tell you I know the Emperor better than most people. I was born here in Antioch; but I have lived fifteen years in Constantinople, until very lately——

A CITIZEN.

Is there aught, think you, in the rumour that the Emperor is minded to settle here for good?

PHOCION.

I know the Emperor's barber, and he reports it so. Let us trust these shameful disturbances may not incense him too much.

A CITIZEN.

Alas, alas, that were a pity indeed!

A SECOND CITIZEN.

If the Emperor lived here, 'twould bring something in to all of us.

PHOCION.

'Twas on that reckoning that I returned here. So now we must do our best, friends; when the Emperor

comes past, we must shout lustily both for him and for Apollo.

A CITIZEN.

[*To another.*] Who is this Apollo, that people begin to talk so much about?

THE OTHER CITIZEN.

Why, 'tis the priest of Corinth,—he who watered what the holy Paul had planted.

THE FIRST CITIZEN.

Ay, ay; to be sure; I think I remember now.

PHOCION.

No, no, no, 'tis not t h a t Apollo; 'tis another one entirely;—this is the Sun-King—the great lyre-playing Apollo.

THE OTHER CITIZEN.

Ah, indeed; t h a t Apollo! Is he better?

PHOCION.

I should think so, indeed.—Look, look, there he comes. Oh, our most blessed Emperor!

The EMPEROR JULIAN, *robed as a high priest, enters, surrounded by priests and servants of the temple. Courtiers and learned men, among whom is* HEKEBOLIUS, *have joined the procession; likewise citizens. Before the Emperor go flute-players and harpers. Soldiers and men of the city guard, with long staves, clear the way before the procession and on either side.*

THE MULTITUDE.

[*Clapping their hands.*] Praise to the Emperor! Praise to Julian, hero and benefactor!

PHOCION.

All hail to Julian and to the Sun-King! Long live Apollo!

THE CITIZENS.

[*In the foreground, on the right.*] Emperor, Emperor, stay long among us!

[JULIAN *makes a sign for the procession to stop.*

JULIAN.

Citizens of Antioch! It were hard for me to name anything that could more rejoice my heart than these inspiriting acclamations. And my heart stands sorely in need of this refreshment.

It was with a downcast spirit that I set forth on this procession, which should be one of joy and exaltation. Nay, more; I will not hide from you that I was this morning on the verge of losing that equanimity which it behoves a lover of wisdom to preserve under all trials.

But can any one chide me for it? I would have you all remember what outrages are threatened elsewhere, and have already been committed here.

PUBLIA.

My lord, my lord!

PHOCION.

Oh pious and righteous Emperor, punish these desperate men!

PUBLIA.

My lord, give me back my Hilarion!

PHOCION.

All good citizens implore your favour towards this city.

JULIAN.

Seek to win the favour of the gods, and of mine you need have no doubt. And surely it is fitting that Antioch should lead the way. Does it not seem as though the Sun-God's eye had dwelt with especial complacency on this city? Ask of travellers, and you shall hear to what melancholy extremes fanaticism has elsewhere proceeded in laying waste our holy places. What is left? A remnant here and there; and nothing of the best.

But with you, citizens of Antioch! Oh, my eyes filled with tears of joy when first I saw that incomparable sanctuary, the very house of Apollo, which seems scarcely to be the work of human hands. Does not the image of the Glorious One stand within it, in unviolated beauty? Not a corner of his altar has broken or crumbled away, not a crack is to be seen in the stately columns.

Oh, when I think of this,—when I feel the fillet round my brow—when I look down upon these garments, dearer to me than the purple robe of empire, then I feel, with a sacred tremor, the presence of the god.

See, see, the sunlight quivers around us in its glory!

Feel, feel, the air is teeming with the perfume of fresh-woven garlands!

Beautiful earth! The home of light and life, the home of joy, the home of happiness and beauty;—what thou wast shalt thou again become!—In the embrace of the Sun-King! Mithra, Mithra!

Forward on our victorious way!

[*The procession moves on again, amid the plaudits of the crowd; those in front come to a stop at the mouth of the narrow street, through which another procession enters the market-place.*

JULIAN.

What hinders us?

HEKEBOLIUS.

Gracious lord, there is something amiss in the other street.

SONG.

[*Far off.*

Blissful our pangs, be they never so cruel;
Blissful our rising, the death-struggle o'er.

PHOCION.

The Galileans, sire! They have them!

PUBLIA.

Hilarion!

PHOCION.

They have them! I hear the fetters——

JULIAN.

Pass them by——!

EUNAPIUS.

[*Hastening through the press.*] We have succeeded marvellously, sire.

JULIAN.

Who are they, these ruffians?

EUNAPIUS.

Some of them belong to this city; but most, it seems, are peasants fleeing from Cappadocia.

JULIAN.

I will not see them. Forward, as I commanded!

THE PRISONERS' SONG.

[*Nearer.*

Blissful our crowning with martyrdom's jewel;
Blissful our meeting with saints gone before.

JULIAN.

The madmen. Not so near to me! My guard, my guard!

[*The two processions have meanwhile encountered each other in the crush. The procession of Apollo has to stand still while the other, with the prisoners—men in chains, surrounded by soldiers, and accompanied by a great concourse of people—passes on.*

PUBLIA.

My child! Hilarion!

HILARION.

[*Among the prisoners.*] Rejoice, my mother!

JULIAN.

Poor deluded creatures! When I hear madness thus speaking in you, I almost doubt whether I have the right to punish you.

ANOTHER VOICE.

[*Among the prisoners.*] Stand aside; take not from us our crown of thorns.

JULIAN.

Night and horror,—what voice is that?

THE LEADER OF THE GUARD.

'Twas this one, sire, who spoke.

[*He pushes one of the prisoners forward, a young man, who leads a half-grown lad by the hand.*

JULIAN.

[*With a cry.*] Agathon!

[THE PRISONER *looks at him, and is silent.*

Agathon, Agathon! Answer me; are you not Agathon?

THE PRISONER.

I am.

JULIAN.

You among these? Speak to me?

AGATHON.

I know you not!

JULIAN.

You do not know me? You know not who I am?

AGATHON.

I know you are the lord of the earth; therefore you are not my lord.

JULIAN.

And the boy——? Is he your young brother?
[*To the leader of the guard.*
This man must be innocent.

EUNAPIUS.

My lord, this man is the very ringleader. He has confessed it; he even glories in his deed.

JULIAN.

So strangely can hunger, and sickness, and misfortune disorder a man's mind. [*To the prisoners.*
If you will but say, in one word, that you repent, none of you shall suffer.

PUBLIA.

[*Shrieks.*] Say it not, Hilarion!

AGATHON.

Be strong, dear brother!

PUBLIA.

Go, go to what awaits you, my only one!

JULIAN.

Hear and bethink you, you others——

AGATHON.

[*To the prisoners.*] Choose between Christ and the Emperor!

THE PRISONERS.

Glory to God in the highest!

JULIAN.

Terrible is the Galilean's power of delusion. It must be broken. Pass them by, the abominable crew! They cloud our gladness; they darken the day with their brooding death-hunger!—Flute-players—men, women—why are you silent? A song—a song in praise of life, and light, and happiness.

THE PROCESSION OF APOLLO.

[*Sings.*

Gladsome with roses our locks to entwine;
Gladsome to bathe in the sunlight divine!

THE PROCESSION OF PRISONERS.

Blissful to sleep 'neath the blood-reeking sod;
Blissful to wake in the gardens of God.

THE PROCESSION OF APOLLO.

Gladsome 'mid incense-clouds still to draw breath.

THE PROCESSION OF PRISONERS.

Blissful in blood-streams to strangle to death.

THE PROCESSION OF APOLLO.

Ever for him who his godhead adoreth
Deep draughts of rapture Apollo outpoureth.

THE PROCESSION OF PRISONERS.

Bones racked and riven, flesh seared to a coal,
He shall make whole!

THE PROCESSION OF APOLLO.

Gladsome to bask in the light-sea that laves us!

THE PROCESSION OF PRISONERS.

Blissful to writhe in the blood-death that saves us!

[*The processions pass each other during the singing. The crowd in the market-place looks on in dull silence.*

SCENE THIRD

The sacred grove around the temple of Apollo. The portico, supported by columns, and approached by a broad flight of steps, is seen among the trees in the background, on the left.

A number of people are rushing about in the grove with loud cries of terror. Far away is heard the music of the procession.

WOMEN.

Mercy! The earth is quaking again!

A MAN IN FLIGHT.

Oh horror! Thunder beneath our feet——!

ANOTHER MAN.

Was it indeed so? Was it the earth that shook?

A WOMAN.

Did you not feel it? That tree there swayed so that the branches whistled through the air.

MANY VOICES.

Hark, hark, hark!

SOME.

'Tis the roll of chariots on the pavements.

OTHERS.

'Tis the sound of drums. Hark to the music——, the Emperor is coming.

[*The procession of Apollo advances from the right through the grove, and stations itself, amid music of flutes and harps, in a semicircle in front of the temple.*

JULIAN.

[*Turning towards the temple, with upstretched hands.*] I accept the omen!——

Never have I felt myself in such close communion with the immortal gods.

The Bow-Wielder is among us. The earth thunders beneath his tread, as when of old he stamped in wrath upon the Trojan shore.

But 'tis not on us he frowns. 'Tis on those unhappy wretches who hate him and his sunlit realm.

Yes,—as surely as good or evil fortune affords the true measure of the gods' favour towards mortals,—so surely is the difference here made manifest between them and us.

Where are the Galileans now? Some under the executioner's hands, others flying through the narrow streets,

ashy pale with terror, their eyes starting from their heads —a shriek between their half-clenched teeth—their hair stiffening with dread, or torn out in despair.

And where are we? Here in Daphne's pleasant grove, where the dryads' balmy breath cools our brows,—here, before the glorious temple of the glorious god, lapped in the melodies of flute and lyre,—here, in light, in happiness, in safety, the god himself made manifest among us.

Where is the God of the Galileans? Where is the Jew, the carpenter's crucified son? Let him manifest himself. Nay, not he!

'Tis fitting, then, that we should throng the sanctuary. There, with my own hands, I will perform the services which are so far from appearing to me mean and unbecoming, that I, on the contrary, esteem them above all others.

[*He advances at the head of the procession, through the multitude, towards the temple.*

A VOICE.

[*Calling out in the throng.*] Stay, ungodly one!

JULIAN.

A Galilean among us?

THE SAME VOICE.

No further, blasphemer!

JULIAN.

Who is he that speaks?

OTHER VOICES IN THE CROWD.

A Galilean priest. A blind old man. Here he stands.

OTHERS AGAIN.

Away, away, with the shameless wretch!

[*A blind* OLD MAN, *in priestly garments, and supported by two younger men, also dressed as priests, is pushed forward till he stands at the foot of the temple steps, facing the Emperor.*

JULIAN.

Ah, what do I see? Tell me, old man, are not you Bishop Maris, of Chalcedon?

THE OLD MAN.

Yes, I am that unworthiest servant of the Church.

JULIAN.

"Unworthiest," you call yourself; and I think you are not far wrong. If I mistake not, you have been one of the foremost in stirring up internal strife among the Galileans.

BISHOP MARIS.

I have done that which weighs me still deeper down in penitence. When you seized the empire, and rumour told of your bent of mind, my heart was beleaguered with unspeakable dread. Blind and enfeebled by age, I could not conceive the thought of setting myself up against the mighty monarch of the world. Yes,—God have mercy on me—I forsook the flock I was appointed to guard, shrank timidly from all the perils that gathered frowning around the Lord's people, and sought shelter here, in my Syrian villa——

JULIAN.

In truth a strange story! And you, timid as you say you are, you, who formerly prized the Emperor's favour so highly, now step forth before me and fling insults in my very face!

BISHOP MARIS.

Now I fear you no longer; for now has Christ fully possessed my heart. In the Church's hour of need, her light and glory burst upon me. All the blood you shed, —all the violence and wrong you do—cry out to heaven, and, re-echoing mightily, ring in my deaf ears, and show me, in my night of blindness, the way I have to go.

JULIAN.

Get you home, old man!

BISHOP MARIS.

Not till you have sworn to renounce your devilish courses. What would you do? Would dust rise up against the spirit? Would the lord of earth cast down the Lord of heaven? See you not that the day of wrath is upon us by reason of your sins? The fountains are parched like eyes that have wept themselves dry. The clouds, which ought to pour the manna of fruitfulness upon us, sweep over our heads, and shed no moisture. This earth, which has been cursed since the morning of time, quakes and trembles under the Emperor's blood-guiltiness.

JULIAN.

What favour do you expect of your God for such excess of zeal, foolish old man? Do you hope that, as of

old, your Galilean master will work a miracle, and give you back your sight?

BISHOP MARIS.

I have all the sight I desire; and I thank the Lord that he quenched my bodily vision, so that I am spared from seeing the man who walks in a darkness more terrible than mine.

JULIAN.

Let me pass!

BISHOP MARIS.

Whither?

JULIAN.

Into the Sun-King's house.

BISHOP MARIS.

You shall not pass. I forbid you in the name of the only God!

JULIAN.

Frantic old man!—Away with him!

BISHOP MARIS.

Ay, lay hands upon me! But he who dares to do so, his hand shall wither. The God of Wrath shall manifest himself in his might——

JULIAN.

Your God is no mighty God. I will show you that the Emperor is stronger than he——

BISHOP MARIS.

Lost creature!—Then must I call down the ban upon thee, thou recreant son of the church!

HEKEBOLIUS.

[*Pale.*] My lord and Emperor, let not this thing be!

BISHOP MARIS.

[*In a loud voice.*] Cursed be thou, Julianus Apostata! Cursed be thou, Emperor Julian! God the Lord hath spat thee forth out of his mouth! Cursed be thine eyes and thy hands! Cursed be thy head and all thy doings! Woe, woe, woe to the apostate! Woe, woe, woe——

[*A hollow rumbling noise is heard. The roof and columns of the temple totter, and are seen to collapse with a thundering crash, while the whole building is wrapped in a cloud of dust. The multitude utter shrieks of terror; many flee, others fall to the ground. There is breathless stillness for a while. Little by little the cloud of dust settles, and the temple of Apollo is seen in ruins.*

BISHOP MARIS.

[*Whose two conductors have fled, stands alone, and says softly.*] God has spoken.

JULIAN.

[*Pale, and in a low voice.*] Apollo has spoken. His temple was polluted: therefore he crushed it.

BISHOP MARIS.

And I tell you it was that Lord who laid the temple of Jerusalem in ruins,

JULIAN.

If it be so, then the churches of the Galilean shall be closed, and his priests shall be driven with scourges to raise up that temple anew.

BISHOP MARIS.

Try, impotent man! Who has had power to restore the temple of Jerusalem since the Prince of Golgotha called down destruction upon it?

JULIAN.

I have the power! The Emperor has the power! Your God shall be made a liar. Stone by stone will I rebuild the temple of Jerusalem in all its glory, as it was in the days of Solomon.

BISHOP MARIS.

Not one stone shall you add to another; for it is accursed of the Lord.

JULIAN.

Wait, wait; you shall see—if you could see—you who stand there forsaken and helpless, groping in the darkness, not knowing where you next may place your foot.

BISHOP MARIS.

Yet I see the glare of the lightning that shall one day fall upon you and yours.

[*He gropes his way out.* JULIAN *remains behind, surrounded by a handful of pale and terrified attendants.*

ACT THIRD

SCENE FIRST

In Antioch. An open colonnade, with statues and a fountain in front of it. To the left, under the colonnade, a flight of steps leads up to the Imperial Palace.

A company of Courtiers, Teachers, Poets, and Orators—among them the court-physician, ORIBASES, *and the poet,* HERACLIUS—*are assembled, some in the colonnade, some around the fountain; most of them are dressed in ragged cloaks, with matted hair and beards.*

HERACLIUS.

I can endure this life no longer. To rise with the sun, plunge into a cold bath, run or fence oneself weary——

ORIBASES.

'Tis all very wholesome.

HERACLIUS.

Is it wholesome to eat seaweed and raw fish?

A COURTIER.

Is it wholesome to have to devour meat in great lumps, all bloody, as it comes from the butcher?

HERACLIUS.

'Tis little enough meat I have seen for the past week. Most of it goes to the altars. Ere long, methinks, we

shall be able to say that the ever-venerable gods are the only meat-eaters in Antioch.

ORIBASES.

Still the same old mocker, Heraclius.

HERACLIUS.

Why, of what are you thinking, friend? Far be it from me to mock at the Emperor's wise decrees. Blessed be the Emperor Julian! Does he not follow in the footsteps of the immortals? For, tell me, does not a certain frugality seem nowadays to reign, even in the heavenly housekeeping?

A COURTIER.

Ha-ha-ha! there you are not far wrong.

HERACLIUS.

Look at Cybele, formerly so bounteous a goddess, whose statue the Emperor lately found in an ash-pit——

ANOTHER COURTIER.

It was in a dunghill——

HERACLIUS.

Like enough; fertilising is Cybele's business. But look at this goddess, I say;—in spite of her hundred breasts, she flows neither with milk nor honey.

[*A circle of laughing hearers has gathered round him. While he is speaking, the* EMPEROR JULIAN *has come forward on the steps in the colonnade, unnoticed by those below. He wears a tattered cloak,*

with a girdle of rope; his hair and beard are unkempt, his fingers stained with ink; in both hands, under his arms, and stuck in his belt, he holds bundles of parchment rolls and papers. He stops and listens to HERACLIUS *with every sign of exasperation.*

HERACLIUS.

[*Continuing.*] It seems as though this wet-nurse of the world had become barren. We might almost think that she had passed the age when women——

A COURTIER.

[*Observing* JULIAN.] Fie, fie, Heraclius,—shame on you! [JULIAN *signs to the courtier to be silent.*

HERACLIUS.

[*Continuing.*] Well, enough of her. But is Ceres in the same case? Does she not display a most melancholy —I had almost said an imperial—parsimony? Yes, believe me, if we had a little more intercourse with high Olympus nowadays, we should hear much to the same tune. I dare swear that nectar and ambrosia are measured out as sparingly as possible. Oh Zeus, how gaunt must thou have grown! Oh roguish Dionysus, how much is there left of the fulness of thy loins? Oh wanton, quick-flushing Venus,—oh Mars, inauspicious to married men——

JULIAN.

[*In great wrath.*] Oh most shameless Heraclius! Oh scurvy, gall-spitting, venom-mouth——

HERACLIUS.

Ah, my gracious Emperor!

JULIAN.

Oh ribald scoffer at all sacred things! And this must I endure—to hear your croaking tongue the instant I leave my library to breathe the fresh morning air!

[*He comes nearer.*

Know you what I hold under my left arm? No, you do not know. 'Tis a polemic against you, blasphemous and foolish Heraclius!

HERACLIUS.

What, my Emperor,—against me?

JULIAN.

Yes, a treatise against you. A treatise with which my indignation has this very night inspired me. Think you I could be other than wroth at your most unseemly behaviour yesterday? How strange was the licence you allowed yourself in the lecture-hall, in my hearing, and that of many other earnest men? Had we not to listen for hours together to the shameful fables about the gods which you must needs retail? How dared you repeat such fictions? Were they not lies, from first to last?

HERACLIUS.

Ah, my Emperor, if you call t h a t lying, then both Ovid and Lucian were liars.

JULIAN.

What else? Oh, I cannot express the indignation that seized me when I understood whither your impudent ad-

dress was tending. "Man, let nothing surprise you," I was tempted to say with the comic poet, when I heard you, like an ill-conditioned cur, barking forth, not expressions of gratitude, but a string of irrational nursery-tales, and ill-written to boot. For your verses were bad, Heraclius; that I have proved in my treatise.

How I longed to arise and leave the hall when I saw you, as in a theatre, making a spectacle both of Dionysus and of the great immortal after whom you are named! If I constrained myself to keep my seat, I can assure you 'twas more out of respect to the players—if I dare call them so—than to the poet. But 'twas most of all for my own sake. I feared it might seem as though I were fleeing like a frightened dove. Therefore I made no sign, but quietly repeated to myself that verse of Homer:

"Bear it, my heart, for a time; heavier things hast thou suffered."

Endure, as before, to hear a mad dog yelp at the eternal gods.

Yes, I see we must stomach this and more. We are fallen on evil days. Show me the happy man who has been suffered to keep his eyes and ears uncontaminated in this iron age!

ORIBASES.

I pray you, my noble master, be not so deeply moved. Let it comfort you that we all listened with displeasure to this man's folly.

JULIAN.

That is in nowise the truth! I read in the countenances of most of you something far different from displeasure

while this shameless mountebank was babbling forth his ribaldries, and then looking round the circle with a greasy smile, just as though he had done something to be proud of.

HERACLIUS.

Alas, my Emperor, I am most unhappy——

JULIAN.

That you may well be; for this is, in truth, no trifling matter. Think you the legends of the gods have not a serious and weighty purpose? Are they not destined to lead the human spirit, by an easy and pleasant path, up to the mystic abodes where reigns the highest god,—and thereby to make our souls capable of union with him? How can it be otherwise? Was it not with that view that the old poets invented such legends, and that Plato and others repeated them, and even added to their number? Apart from this purpose, I tell you, these stories would be fit only for children or barbarians,—and scarcely for them. But was it children and barbarians, pray, that you had before you yesterday? Where do you find the audacity to address me as if I were a child? Do you think yourself a sage, and entitled to a sage's freedom of speech, because you wear a ragged cloak, and carry a beggar's staff in your hand?

A COURTIER.

How true, my Emperor! No, no, it needs more than that!

JULIAN.

Ay? Does it indeed? And what? To let your hair grow, perhaps, and never clean your nails? Oh hypo-

critical Cleon! I know you, one and all. Here, in this treatise, I have given you a name which——; you shall hear——

He searches through the bundles of papers. At that moment LIBANIUS *enters from the right, richly clad, and with a haughty mien.*

ORIBASES.

[*In a low tone.*] Ah, you come in the nick of time, most honoured Libanius!

JULIAN.

[*Continuing his search.*] Where can it be——

LIBANIUS.

[*To* ORIBASES.] What mean you, friend?

ORIBASES.

The Emperor is much enraged; your coming will pacify him.

JULIAN.

Ah, here I have it—— [*With annoyance.*
What does that man want?

ORIBASES.

Sire, this is——

JULIAN.

No matter, no matter! Now you shall hear whether I know you or not. There are among the wretched Galileans a number of madmen who call themselves pen-

itents. These renounce all earthly possessions, and yet demand great gifts of the fools who treat them as holy men and almost as objects of worship. Behold, you are like these penitents, except that I shall give you nothing. For I am not so foolish as those others. Yes, yes, were I not firm on that point, you would soon overrun the whole court with your shamelessness. Nay, do you not already do so? Are there not many among you who would come again, even if I drove them away? Oh my dear friends, what can this lead to? Are you lovers of wisdom? Are you followers of Diogenes, whose garb and habits you ape? In truth, you do not haunt the schools nearly so much as you besiege my treasurer. What a pitiful and despicable thing has not wisdom become because of you! Oh, hypocrites and babblers without understanding! Oh you—— But what is yonder fat man seeking?

ORIBASES.

Sire, it is the chief magistrate of the city——

JULIAN.

The chief magistrate must wait. The matters we have in hand must take precedence of all meaner affairs. How now? Why this air of impatience? Is your business so weighty——

LIBANIUS.

By no means, sire; I can come another day.

[*He is going.*

ORIBASES.

Sire, do you not recognise this distinguished man? This is the rhetorician Libanius.

JULIAN.

What? Libanius? Impossible. Libanius here—the incomparable Libanius! I cannot believe it.

LIBANIUS.

I thought the Emperor knew that the citizens of Antioch had chosen me as their chief magistrate.

JULIAN.

Assuredly I knew it. But when I made my entrance into the city, and the magistrates came forth to greet me with an oration, I looked in vain for Libanius. Libanius was not among them.

LIBANIUS.

The Emperor had uttered no wish to hear Libanius speak on that occasion.

JULIAN.

The orator Libanius ought to have known what were the Emperor's wishes in that respect.

LIBANIUS.

Libanius knew not what changes time and absence might have wrought. Libanius therefore judged it more becoming to take his place among the multitude. He chose, indeed, a sufficiently conspicuous position; but the Emperor deigned not to let his eyes fall on him.

JULIAN.

I thought you received my letter the day after——

LIBANIUS.

Your new friend Priscus brought it to me.

JULIAN.

And none the less—perhaps all the more—you held aloof——?

LIBANIUS.

Headache and weighty business——

JULIAN.

Ah, Libanius, in bygone days you were not so chary of your presence.

LIBANIUS.

I come where I am bidden. Ought I to be intrusive? Would you have me stand in the way of the Emperor's much-honoured Maximus?

JULIAN.

Maximus never appears at court.

LIBANIUS.

And for good reason. Maximus holds a court of his own. The Emperor has conceded him a whole palace.

JULIAN.

Oh my Libanius, have I not conceded you my heart? How can you envy Maximus his palace?

LIBANIUS.

I envy no man. I do not even envy my colleagues Themistius and Mamertinus, although you have conferred on them such signal proofs of your favour. Nor

do I envy Hekebolius, whose wealth you have increased by such princely presents. I even rejoice to be the only man to whom you have given nothing. For I well know the reason of the exception. You wish the cities of your empire to abound in everything, and most of all in oratory, knowing that it is that distinction which marks us off from the barbarians. Now you feared that I, like certain others, might, if you gave me riches, become lukewarm in my art. The Emperor has therefore preferred to let the teacher of his youth remain poor, in order to hold him the closer to his craft. Thus do I interpret a course of action which has astonished some whom I forbear to name. 'Tis for the honour and well-being of the state that you have given me nothing. I am to lack riches that I may abound in eloquence.

JULIAN.

And I, my Libanius, have also understood the reason why the teacher of my youth has let me pass many months here in Antioch without presenting himself. Libanius doubtless deemed that any services his former pupil may have rendered to the gods, to the state, or to learning, were not great enough to deserve celebration by the man who is called the king of eloquence. Libanius no doubt thought that meaner orators were better fitted to deal with such trivial things. Moreover, Libanius has remained silent out of care for the balance of my mind. You feared, doubtless, to see the Emperor intoxicated with arrogance, reeling like one who in his thirst has drunk too deeply of the leaf-crowned wine-bowl, had you lavished on him any of that art which is the marvel of Greece, and raised him, so to speak, to the level of the gods, by pouring out before him so precious a libation.

LIBANIUS.

Ah, my Emperor, if I could believe that my oratory possessed such power——

JULIAN.

And why should you not believe it, incomparable friend? Oh, leave me. I am wroth with you, Libanius. But it is the lover's anger against the one he loves.

LIBANIUS.

Is it indeed so? Oh my crowned brother, let me then tell you that not a day has passed since your coming hither on which I have not cursed the steadfastness that would not let me make the first advance. My friends assured me—not without some show of reason—that you had undertaken this long journey chiefly in order to see me and hear me speak. But Julian himself gave no sign. What was I to do? Should I flatter as Emperor him whom I loved as a man?

JULIAN.

[*Embracing and kissing him.*] My Libanius!

LIBANIUS.

[*Kissing the Emperor in return.*] My friend and brother!

ORIBASES.

How honourable to both!

COURTIERS AND TEACHERS.

[*Clapping their hands.*] How beautiful! How sublime!

JULIAN.

Libanius, cruel friend,—how could you find it in your heart to balk me so long of this happy moment? During the weeks and months I have waited for you, my countenance has been veiled in Scythian darkness.

LIBANIUS.

Alas, you were in better case than I; for you had those to whom you could speak about your absent friend.

JULIAN.

Say not so. I had only the hapless lover's comfort; that of sorrowfully repeating your name, and crying out: "Libanius, Libanius!"

LIBANIUS.

Ah, whilst you spoke thus to empty air, I spoke to the four walls of my chamber. Most of the day I passed in bed, picturing to myself who was then with you—now this one, now that. "Once it was otherwise," I said to myself,—"then it was I who possessed Julian's ear."

JULIAN.

And meanwhile you let me pine away with longing. Look at me. Have I not grown a century older?

LIBANIUS.

Oh, have I not suffered as great a change? You did not recognise me.

JULIAN.

This meeting has been to both of us as a bath, from which we go forth healed.

[*They embrace and kiss again.*

And now, beloved friend, now tell me what has brought you hither to-day; for I cannot doubt that you have some special errand.

LIBANIUS.

To say nothing of my longing—so it is. Would that another had been sent in my stead! But the post of honour to which the confidence of the citizens has summoned me makes it my duty to perform all missions alike.

JULIAN.

Speak, my Libanius, and tell me how I can serve you.

LIBANIUS.

Let me begin by saying that the inhabitants of this city are sunk in sorrow because you have withdrawn your favour from them.

JULIAN.

H'm——!

LIBANIUS.

And this sorrow has been coupled with anxiety and disquiet since Alexander, the new governor, assumed office.

JULIAN.

Aha; indeed!

LIBANIUS.

The exaltation of such a man could not but take us by surprise. Alexander has hitherto filled only trifling

offices, and that in a manner little calculated to earn him either the respect or the affection of the citizens.

JULIAN.

I know that well, Libanius!

LIBANIUS.

Alexander is violent in all his dealings, and justice is of little moment in his eyes——

JULIAN.

I know it; I know all you tell me. Alexander is a rough man, without morals and without eloquence. Alexander has in no way deserved so great advancement. But you may tell the citizens of Antioch that they have deserved Alexander. Ay, they have, if possible, deserved a still worse ruler, covetous and intractable as they are——

LIBANIUS.

It is, then, as we feared; this is a punishment——

JULIAN.

Hear me, Libanius! How did I come hither? With full confidence in the people of this city. Antioch, chosen by the Sun-King for his especial seat, was to help me to repair all the wrong and ingratitude which had so long been shown to the immortals. But how have you met me? Some with defiance, others with lukewarmness. What have I not to endure here? Does not that Cappadocian, Gregory of Nazianzus, still wander about the city, stirring up the ignorant Galileans by his audacious

speeches? Has not a poet arisen among them—a certain Apollinaris—who, with his wild songs, inflames their fanaticism to the point of madness?

And what do I not learn from other places? In Caesarea, have they not carried out their threat, and wrecked the temple of Fortuna! Oh shame and infamy! Where were the goddess's worshippers the while? Did they prevent it? No, they did not lift a finger, Libanius, though they should have laid down life itself to preserve the sanctuary.

But wait, wait! The Galileans of Caesarea shall atone with their blood, and the whole city shall go up in flames as soon as I have time at my disposal.

LIBANIUS.

My lord and friend,—if you would permit me——

JULIAN.

Permit me, first. Say yourself whether I ought to tolerate such things? Say whether my zeal can bear with such insults to the divinities who hover over and shield me? But what can I do? Have I not laboured through many a long night to disprove these unhappy delusions,—writing, Libanius, till my eyes were red, and my fingers black with ink? And what good, think you, has it done? I have reaped scorn instead of thanks, not only from the fanatics themselves, but even from men who pretend to share my opinions. And now, to crown all these mortifications, I find you acting as spokesman for the complaints of a handful of citizens against Alexander, who at least does his best to keep the Galileans in check.

LIBANIUS.

Oh, my august friend,—that is precisely our ground of complaint.

JULIAN.

Do y o u tell me this?

LIBANIUS.

'Tis not with my own good will that I do the city's errands. I urged upon the council that they ought to choose for this task the most distinguished man in the town, thereby implying that I did not wish to be chosen. Despite this hint, the choice fell on me, who am certainly not——

JULIAN.

Well, well, well! But oh, Libanius, that I must hear from your mouth——!

LIBANIUS.

I beg my crowned brother to remember that I speak in the name of the city! For myself, I prize the immortal gods as highly as any one. Where would the art of oratory be without the legends which the poets of bygone days have left to us? May not these legends be likened to a rich vein of ore, whence an accomplished orator can forge himself both weapons and ornaments, if only he understands how to work the metal skilfully? How flat and insipid would not the maxims of wisdom seem, expressed without images or comparisons borrowed from the supernatural?

But think, oh my friend—can you expect the multitude to take this view, especially in such an age as ours? I assure you that in Antioch, at any rate, 'tis not to be

hoped for. The citizens—both Galileans and the more enlightened—have of late years lived at peace without greatly concerning themselves as to these matters. There is scarce a household in the city wherein people are of one mind upon things divine. But, until lately, domestic peace has nevertheless prevailed.

Now the case is altered. People have begun to weigh creed against creed. Discord has broken out between the nearest kinsmen. For example, a citizen, whose name I forbear to mention, has lately disinherited his son because the young man separated himself from the Galilean community. Commerce and social life suffer from all this, especially now, when scarcity reigns and famine stands at the door.

JULIAN.

Enough, enough,—more than enough, Libanius! You complain of scarcity. But tell me, has luxury ever been more rampant than now? Is the amphitheatre ever empty when it is reported that a new lion has arrived from Africa? Last week, when there was a talk of turning all idlers and vagabonds out of the city because of the dearth, did not the citizens loudly demand that the gladiators and dancing-girls should be exempted; for they felt they could not exist without them!

Ah, well may the gods desert you in wrath over your folly! There are plenty of teachers of wisdom in this city, but where is wisdom? Why do so few tread in my footsteps? Why stop at Socrates? Why not go a few steps further, and follow Diogenes, or—if I dare say so—me, since we lead you to happiness? For is not happiness the goal of all philosophy? And what is happiness but harmony with oneself? Does the eagle want golden feathers? Or the lion claws of silver? Or does the

pomegranate-tree long to bear fruits of sparkling stone? I tell you no man has a right to enjoy until he has steeled himself to forbear. Ay, he ought not to touch enjoyment with his finger-tips until he has learnt to trample it under foot.

Ah truly, we are far from that! But for that end will I work with all my might. For the sake of these things I will give up others which are also important. The Persian king—alarmed at my approach—has offered me terms of peace. I think of accepting them, that I may have my hands free to enlighten and improve you, intractable generation! As to the other matter, it must remain as it is. You shall keep Alexander. Make the best you can of him.

Yet, my Libanius, it shall not be said that I have sent you from me in disfavour——

LIBANIUS.

Ah, my Emperor——

JULIAN.

You mentioned with a certain bitterness that I had given much to Themistius and Mamertinus. But did I not also take something from them? Did I not take from them my daily companionship? 'Tis my intent to give you more than I gave them.

LIBANIUS.

Ah, what do you tell me, my august brother?

JULIAN.

'Tis not my intent to give you gold or silver. That folly prevailed with me only at first, until I saw how people flocked round me, like thirsty harvesters round a

fountain, elbowing and jostling one another, and each stretching out a hollow hand to have it filled first, and filled to the brim. I have grown wiser since. I think it may be said in particular that the Goddess of Wisdom has not withdrawn her countenance from me in the measures I have taken for the good of this city.

LIBANIUS.

Doubtless, doubtless!

JULIAN.

Therefore I commission you, oh my Libanius, to compose a panegyric on me.

LIBANIUS.

Ah, what an honour——!

JULIAN.

You must lay special stress on the benefits for which the citizens of Antioch owe me gratitude. I hope you will produce an oration that shall do honour both to the orator and to his subject. This task, my Libanius, shall be my gift to you. I know of nothing more fitting to offer to a man like you.

LIBANIUS.

Oh, my crowned friend, what a transcendent favour!

JULIAN.

And now to the fencing-hall. Then, my friends, we will walk through the streets, to give these insolent townsfolk a profitable example of sobriety in dress and simplicity in manners.

ORIBASES.

Through the streets sire? In this midday heat——

A COURTIER.

Pray, sire, let me be excused; I feel extremely unwell——

HERACLIUS.

I too, most gracious lord! All this morning I have been struggling against a feeling of nausea——

JULIAN.

Then take an emetic, and see if you cannot throw up your folly at the same time.

Oh Diogenes,—how degenerate are your successors! They are ashamed to wear your cloak in the open street.

[*He goes out angrily through the colonnade.*

SCENE SECOND

A mean street in the outskirts of the city. In the row of houses to the left stands a small church.

A great multitude of lamenting Christians is assembled. The psalm writer APOLLINARIS *and the teacher* CYRILLUS *are among them. Women with children in their arms utter loud cries.* GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS *passes along the street.*

THE WOMEN.

[*Rushing up to him and taking hold of his garments.*] Ah, Gregory, Gregory—speak to us! Comfort us in this anguish!

GREGORY.

Only One can give comfort here. Hold fast by Him. Cling to the Lord our Shepherd.

A WOMAN.

Know you this, oh man of God,—the Emperor has commanded that all our sacred scriptures shall be burnt!

GREGORY.

I have heard it; but I cannot believe that his folly is so great.

APOLLINARIS.

It is true. Alexander, the new governor, has sent out soldiers to search the houses of the brethren. Even women and children are whipped till they bleed, if they are suspected of hiding books.

CYRILLUS.

The Emperor's decree applies not to Antioch only, nor even to Syria; it applies to the empire and the whole world. Every smallest word that is written concerning Christ is to be wiped out of existence, and out of the memory of believers.

APOLLINARIS.

Oh ye mothers, weep for yourselves and for your children!

The day will come when ye shall dispute with those ye now carry in your arms, as to what was in truth written in the lost Word of God. The day will come when your children's children shall mock at you, and shall not know who or what Christ was.

The day will come when no heart shall remember that once on a time the Saviour of the world suffered and died.

The last believer shall go in darkness to his grave, and from that hour shall Golgotha vanish away from the earth, like the place where the Garden of Eden lay.

Woe, woe, to the new Pilate! He is not content, like the first, to slay the Saviour's body. He murders the word and the faith!

THE WOMEN.

[*Tearing their hair and rending their garments.*] Woe, woe, woe!

GREGORY.

And I say unto you, be of good cheer! God does not die. 'Tis not from Julian that the danger comes. The danger was there long ere he arose, in the weakness and contentiousness of our hearts.

CYRILLUS.

Oh, Gregory, how can you ask us to remain steadfast amid these horrors?—Brethren and sisters—know you what has happened in Arethusa? The unbelievers have maltreated the old bishop Marcus, dragged him by the hair through the streets, cast him into the sewers, dragged him up again, bleeding and befouled, smeared him over with honey and set him in a tree, a prey to wasps and poisonous flies.

GREGORY.

And has not God's power been gloriously manifested in this very Marcus? What was Marcus before? A man of doubtful faith. When the troubles broke out in Arethusa, he even fled from the city. But behold—no

sooner had he heard in his hiding-place that the raging crew were avenging the bishop's flight on innocent brethren, than he returned of his own free will. And how did he bear the torments which so appalled even his executioners, that in order to withdraw with some show of credit, they offered to release him if he would pay a very trifling fine? Was not his answer: No—and no, and again no? The Lord God was with him. He neither died nor yielded. His countenance showed neither terror nor impatience. In the tree wherein he hung, he thanked God for being lifted a few steps nearer heaven, while the others, as he said, crawled about on the flat earth.

CYRILLUS.

A miracle must have happened to the resolute old man. If you had heard, as I did, the shrieks from the prison, that day in the summer when Hilarion and the others were tortured——! They were like no other shrieks—agonised, rasping, mixed with hissing sounds every time the white-hot iron buried itself in the raw flesh.

APOLLINARIS.

Oh, Cyrillus, have you forgotten how the shrieks passed over into song? Did not Hilarion sing even in death? Did not that heroic Cappadocian boy sing until he gave up the ghost under the hands of the torturers? Did not Agathon, that boy's brother, sing until he swooned away, and then woke up in madness?

Verily I say unto you, so long as song rings out above our sorrows, Satan shall never conquer!

GREGORY.

Be of good cheer. Love one another and suffer one for another, as Serapion in Doristora lately suffered for

his brothers, for love of whom he let himself be scourged, and cast alive into the furnace!

See, see,—has not the Lord's avenging hand already been raised against the ungodly? Have you not heard the tidings from Heliopolis under Lebanon?

APOLLINARIS.

I know it. In the midst of the ribald feast of Aphrodite, the heathen broke into the house of our holy sisters, violated them, murdered them amid tortures unspeakable——

THE WOMEN.

Woe, woe!

APOLLINARIS.

——ay, some of the wretches even tore open the bodies of the martyrs, dragged forth the entrails and ate the liver raw!

THE WOMEN.

Woe, woe, woe!

GREGORY.

The God of Wrath seasoned the meal. How have they thriven on it? Go to Heliopolis, and you shall see those men with a putrefying poison in all their veins, their eyes and teeth dropping out, bereft of speech and understanding. Horror has fallen on the city. Many heathens have been converted since that night.

Therefore I fear not this pestilent monster who has risen up against the church; I fear not this crowned hireling of hell, who is bent upon finishing the work of the enemy of mankind. Let him fall upon us with fire, with sword, with the wild beasts of the amphitheatre! Should his madness even drive him further than he has yet gone

—what does it matter? For all this there is a remedy, and the path lies open to victory.

THE WOMEN.

Christ, Christ!

OTHER VOICES.

There he is! There he comes!

SOME.

Who?

OTHERS.

The Emperor! The murderer! The enemy of God!

GREGORY.

Be still! Let him pass by in silence.

[*A detachment of the Imperial Guards comes along the street.* JULIAN *follows, accompanied by courtiers and philosophers, all surrounded by guards. Another division of the Household Guard, led by* FROMENTINUS, *closes the procession.*

A WOMAN.

[*Softly to the others.*] See, see, he has wrapped himself in rags, like a beggar.

ANOTHER WOMAN.

He must be out of his senses.

A THIRD WOMAN.

God has already stricken him.

A FOURTH WOMAN.

Hide your little ones against your breasts. Let not their eyes behold the monster.

JULIAN.

Aha, are not these all Galileans? What do you here in the sunshine, in the open street, you spawn of darkness?

GREGORY.

You have closed our churches; therefore we stand without and praise the Lord our God.

JULIAN.

Ah, is that you, Gregory? So you still linger here. But beware; my patience will not last for ever.

GREGORY.

I seek not a martyr's death; I do not even desire it; but if it be allotted me, I shall glory in dying for Christ.

JULIAN.

Your phrases weary me. I will not have you here. Why cannot you keep to your stinking dens? Go home, I tell you!

A WOMAN.

Oh, Emperor, where is our home?

ANOTHER WOMAN.

Where are our houses? The heathen have plundered them and driven us out.

A VOICE IN THE THRONG.

Your soldiers have taken from us all our goods.

OTHER VOICES.

Oh Emperor, Emperor, why have you seized upon our possessions?

JULIAN.

You ask that? I will tell you, ignorant creatures! If your riches are taken from you, 'tis out of care for your souls' weal. Has not the Galilean said that you shall possess neither silver nor gold? Has not your Master promised that you shall one day ascend to heaven? Ought you not, then, to thank me for making your rising as easy as possible?

THE PHILOSOPHERS.

Oh, incomparably answered!

APOLLINARIS.

Sire, you have robbed us of what is more precious than gold and silver. You have robbed us of God's own word. You have robbed us of our sacred scriptures.

JULIAN.

I know you, hollow-eyed psalm-singer! Are not you Apollinaris? I believe if I take away your senseless books, you are capable of making up others, just as senseless, in their stead. But you are a pitiful bungler, let me tell you, both in prose and verse! By Apollo! no true Greek would suffer a line of yours to pass his lips. The pamphlet you sent me the other day, which you had the effrontery to entitle "The Truth," I have read, understood, and condemned.

APOLLINARIS.

'Tis possible you may have read it; but understood it you have not; for if you had, you would not have condemned it.

JULIAN.

Ha-ha! the rejoinder I am preparing will prove that I understood it.—But as to those books whose loss you lament and howl over, I may tell you that you will presently hold them cheaper when it is proved that Jesus of Nazareth was a liar and deceiver.

THE WOMEN.

Woe to us; woe to us!

CYRILLUS.

[*Stepping forward.*] Emperor—what mean you by that?

JULIAN.

Did not the crucified Jew prophesy that the Temple of Jerusalem should lie in ruins till the end of time?

CYRILLUS.

So shall it be!

JULIAN.

Oh fools! At this moment my general, Jovian, with two thousand workmen, is at Jerusalem, rebuilding the temple in all its glory. Wait, wait, you stiff-necked doubters—you shall learn who is the mightier, the Emperor or the Galilean.

CYRILLUS.

Sire, that you yourself shall learn to your dismay. I held my peace till you blasphemed the Highest, and called him a liar; but now I tell you that you have not a feather-weight of power against the Crucified One!

JULIAN.

[*Constraining himself.*] Who are you, and what do you call yourself?

CYRILLUS.

[*Coming forward.*] I will tell you. First and foremost I call myself a Christian, and that is a most honourable name; for it shall never be wiped away from the earth.

Furthermore, I bear the name of Cyrillus, and am known by that name among my brethren and sisters.

But if I keep the former name unspotted, I shall reap eternal life as a reward.

JULIAN.

You are mistaken, Cyrillus! You know I am not unversed in the mysteries of your creed. Believe me—he in whom you put your trust is not the being you imagine. He died, in very truth, at the time when the Roman, Pontius Pilate, was governor in Judea.

CYRILLUS.

I am not mistaken. 'Tis you, oh Emperor, who err in this. 'Tis you, who repudiated Christ at the moment when he gave you dominion over the world.

Therefore I tell you, in his name, that he will quickly take from you both your dominion and your life; and

then shall you recognise, too late, how mighty is he whom in your blindness you despise.

Yea, as you have forgotten his benefits, he will not remember his lovingkindness, when he shall rise up to punish you.

You have cast down his altars; he shall cast you down from your throne. You have taken delight in trampling his law under foot, that very law which you yourself once proclaimed to believers. In like manner shall the Lord trample you under his heel. Your body shall be scattered to the wild winds, and your soul shall descend to a place of greater torments than you can devise for me and mine!

[*The women flock around* CYRILLUS, *with cries and lamentations.*

JULIAN.

I would fain have spared you, Cyrillus! The gods are my witnesses that I hate you not for your faith's sake. But you have mocked at my imperial power and authority, and that I must punish.

[*To the Captain of the Guard.*

Fromentinus, lead this man to prison, and let the executioner Typhon give him as many lashes with the scourge as are needful to make him confess that the Emperor, and not the Galilean, has all power upon earth.

GREGORY.

Be strong, Cyrillus, my brother!

CYRILLUS.

[*With upraised hands.*] How blessed am I, to suffer for the glory of God!

[*The soldiers sieze and drag him out.*

THE WOMEN.

[*With tears and sobs.*] Woe to us! Woe, woe, to the apostate!

JULIAN.

Disperse these maniacs! Let them be driven out of the city as rebels. I will no longer endure this defiance and scandal.

[*The guard drives the lamenting crowd into the side streets. Only the Emperor and his suite remain behind. A man who has hitherto been hidden is now seen lying at the church door; he is in torn garments, and has ashes strewn on his head.*

A SOLDIER.

[*Stirring him with a lance-shaft.*] Up, up; be off!

THE MAN.

[*Looking up.*] Tread under foot this salt without savour, rejected of the Lord!

JULIAN.

Oh everlasting gods!—Hekebolius——!

THE COURTIERS.

Ah, so it is,—Hekebolius!

HEKEBOLIUS.

That is no longer my name! I am nameless. I have denied the baptism that gave me my name!

JULIAN.

Arise, friend? Your mind is distempered——

HEKEBOLIUS.

Judas's brother is pestiferous. Away from me——

JULIAN.

Oh feeble-hearted man——

HEKEBOLIUS.

Avaunt, tempter! Take back your thirty pieces of silver! Is it not written, "Thou shalt forsake wife and children for the Lord's sake"? And I——? For the sake of wife and children have I betrayed the Lord my God! Woe, woe, woe!

[*He casts himself down again on his face.*

JULIAN.

Such flames of madness do these writings kindle over the earth!

And do I not well to burn them?

Wait! Ere a year has passed the Temple of the Jews shall stand again on Zion hill,—the splendour of its golden dome shining over the world, and testifying: Liar, liar, liar!

[*He goes hastily away, followed by the philosophers.*

SCENE THIRD

A road outside the city. To the left, by the wayside, stands a statue of Cybele amid the stumps of hewn-down trees. At a little distance to the left is a fountain, with a stone basin. It is towards sunset.

On a step at the foot of the goddess's statue sits an old priest, with a covered basket in his lap. A number

of men and women carry water from the fountain. Passers-by are seen on the road. From the left enters the dyer PHOCION, *meanly clad, with a great bundle on his head. He meets* EUNAPIUS *the barber, who comes from the city.*

PHOCION.

Aha!—my friend Eunapius in full court dress!

EUNAPIUS.

Shame on you for mocking a poor man.

PHOCION.

Call you that mockery? I thought it was the highest distinction.

EUNAPIUS.

You may say so indeed. 'Tis now the height of distinction to go in rags, especially if they have lain long enough in the gutter.

PHOCION.

How will all this end, think you?

EUNAPIUS.

What should I care? I know how it has ended with me, and that is enough.

PHOCION.

Are you no longer in the Emperor's service?

EUNAPIUS.

What should the Emperor Julian want with a barber? Think you he has his hair cut, or his beard trimmed?

He does not even comb them. But how goes it with you? You do not look much better off.

PHOCION.

Alas, Eunapius, purple-dyeing has had its day.

EUNAPIUS.

Right, right; now we dye only the backs of the Christians. But what is that you are toiling with?

PHOCION.

A bundle of willow bark. I am to dye fools' cloaks for the philosophers.

[*A detachment of soldiers enters from the right; they range themselves beside the statue of Cybele.*

PHOCION.

[*To one of the men beside the stone basin.*] What does this mean?

THE MAN.

The statue is to be fed once more.

PHOCION.

Will the Emperor sacrifice here this evening?

ANOTHER MAN.

Does he not sacrifice both morning and evening—sometimes here, sometimes there?

A WOMAN.

'Tis hard on us poor folk that the new Emperor is so much in love with the gods.

ANOTHER WOMAN.

Nay, Dione, say not so. Ought we not all to love the gods?

THE FIRST WOMAN.

Maybe, maybe; but 'tis hard on us none the less——

ONE OF THE MEN.

[*Points to the right.*] Look—there he comes.

The EMPEROR JULIAN *advances in priestly attire, with a sacrificial knife. Many philosophers, priests, and servants surround him, along with his guard. After them comes a crowd of people, some mocking, some indignant.*

ONE OF THE NEWCOMERS.

There stands the goddess. Now you shall see sport.

AN OLDER MAN.

Do you call that sport? How many hungry mouths could be fed with what is wasted here?

JULIAN.

[*Approaching the statue.*] Oh, this sight! It fills my heart with rapture and my eyes with tears of sorrow.

Yes, I must indeed weep, when I remember that this awe-inspiring goddess's statue, overthrown by impious and audacious hands, has lain so long as if in a sleep of oblivion—and that, moreover, in a place I loathe to mention.

[*Suppressed laughter among the listeners.* JULIAN *turns angrily.*

But I feel no less rapture when I remember that to me it was vouchsafed to rescue the Divine Mother from so unworthy a situation.

May I not well be enraptured by this thought?—Men say of me, that I have won a few victories over the barbarians, and praise me for them. For my part, I set more value on what I am doing for the gods; for to them we owe all our strength and all our care.

[*To those by the stone basin.*

It pleases me, however, to find that there are some in this stiff-necked city who are not deaf to my exhortations, but have come forth with seemly piety—and, I doubt not, have brought with them suitable offerings.

[*He goes up to the* OLD PRIEST.

What do I see? One solitary old man! Where are your brethren of the temple?

THE OLD PRIEST.

Sire, they are all dead but I.

JULIAN.

All dead! The road laid irreverently close to the sanctuary. The venerable grove hewn down——

Old man—where are the sacrificial offerings?

THE OLD PRIEST.

[*Pointing to the basket.*] Here, sire!

JULIAN.

Yes, yes; but the rest?

THE OLD PRIEST.

This is all. [*He opens the basket.*

JULIAN.

A goose! And this goose is all?

THE OLD PRIEST.

Yes, sire!

JULIAN.

And what pious man have we to thank for so generous an offering?

THE OLD PRIEST.

I brought it with me myself. Oh, sire, be not wroth; this one was all I had.

[*Laughter and mutterings among the bystanders.*

SUPPRESSED VOICES.

'Tis enough. A goose is more than enough.

JULIAN.

Oh Antioch—you put my patience to a hard test!

A MAN IN THE CROWD.

Bread first, offerings afterwards!

PHOCION.

[*Nudging him in the side.*] Well said; well said!

ANOTHER MAN.

Give the citizens food; the gods may do as best they can.

A THIRD MAN.

We were better off under Chi and Kappa!

JULIAN.

Oh you shameless brawlers, with your Chi and Kappa! Think you I do not know whom you mean by Chi and Kappa? Ho-ho, I know very well. 'Tis a by-word among you. You mean Christ and Constantius. But their dominion is past, and I shall soon find means of subduing the frowardness and ingratitude you display both towards the gods and towards me. You are offended because I allot the gods their due offerings. You mock at my modest attire and my untrimmed beard. This beard is a very thorn in your eyes! You call it, irreverently, a goat's beard. But I tell you, oh fools, it is a wise man's beard. I am not ashamed to let you know that this beard harbours vermin, as willow copses harbour game—and yet this despised beard is more honourable to me than your smooth-shaven chins to you!

EUNAPIUS.

[*Half aloud.*] What foolishness; most unreasonable!

JULIAN.

But think you I will leave your mockeries unanswered? No, no, you will find yourselves mistaken. Only wait; you shall hear from me sooner than you think. I am at this moment preparing a treatise, entitled "The Beard-Hater." And would you know against whom it is directed? It is directed against you, citizens of Antioch—against you, whom I describe in it as "those ignorant hounds." You will find in it my reasons for many things that now seem strange to you in my behaviour.

FROMENTINUS.

[*Entering from the right.*] Great Emperor, I bring you good news. Cyrillus has already given way——

JULIAN.

Ah, I thought so.

FROMENTINUS.

Typhon did his work bravely. The prisoner was stripped, tied by the wrists, and slung to the rafters, so that the tips of his toes barely touched the floor; then Typhon scourged him from behind with a lash of ox sinews that circled his body round to the breast.

JULIAN.

Oh how wicked to force us to use such means!

FROMENTINUS.

Lest he should die under our hands, we had at last to release the obstinate wretch. He remained for a time quite still, and seemed to reflect; then suddenly he demanded to be brought before the Emperor.

JULIAN.

This pleases me. And you are having him brought hither?

FROMENTINUS.

Yes, sire—here they come with him.

A detachment of soldiers enters, conducting CYRILLUS.

JULIAN.

Ah, my good Cyrillus,—you are not quite so overweening as you were, I see.

CYRILLUS.

Have you read in the entrails of some beast or bird what I have to say to you?

JULIAN.

Methinks there needs no divination to foresee that you have come to your senses, that you renounce your delusions concerning the Galilean's power, and that you acknowledge both the Emperor and our gods to be greater than he.

CYRILLUS.

Imagine no such thing. Your gods are powerless; and if you cling to these graven images, that can neither hear nor see, you yourself will soon be as powerless as they.

JULIAN.

Cyrillus—is this what you have to say?

CYRILLUS.

No; I come to thank you. Hitherto I have dreaded you and your tortures. But in the hour of agony I won the victory of the spirit over all that is corruptible. Yes, Emperor, while your hirelings thought I was hanging in torment from the prison roof,—I lay, happy as a child, in my Saviour's arms; and when your executioners seemed to be flaying my body with stripes, the Lord passed his healing hand over the wounds, took away the crown of thorns, and placed on my brow the crown of life.

Therefore I thank you; no mortal has ever done me so great a service as you.

And lest you should think I fear you for the future, see——

[*He throws back his cloak, tears open his wounds and casts pieces of flesh at the Emperor's feet.*

—see—see—gorge yourself with the blood you thirst after!

But as for me, know that I thirst after Jesus Christ alone.

[*Shrieks of horror are heard among the crowd.*

MANY VOICES.

This will bring disaster on us all!

JULIAN.

[*Who has recoiled.*] Hold the madman, lest he lay hands on us!

[*The soldiers surround* CYRILLUS *and drag him to the water basin; at the same moment the voices of singing women are heard to the right.*

Look there, Fromentinus—what strange company is that——?

FROMENTINUS.

My gracious Emperor, 'tis the psalm-singers——

JULIAN.

Ah, that band of raving women——

FROMENTINUS.

The governor Alexander has taken from them some writings which they hold sacred. They are going out of the city to weep at the graves of the Christians.

JULIAN.

[*With clenched hands.*] Defiance; defiance—from men and women alike!

[*Old* PUBLIA, *and many other women, come along the road.*

PUBLIA.

[*Sings.*

Their gods are of marble, and silver and gold.
They shall crumble to mould.

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

To mould; to mould!

PUBLIA.

They murder our brothers; our children they smite.
Soar up, doves of song, and pray God to requite!

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Pray God to requite!

PUBLIA.

[*Catching sight of* JULIAN.] There he stands! Woe to the miscreant who has burnt the word of the Lord! Think you you can burn the word of the Lord with fire? I will tell you where it burns.

[*She wrests a knife from one of the sacrificing priests, cuts open her breast and probes into the wound.*

Here the word burns. You may burn our books; but the word shall burn in the hearts of men until the uttermost end of time!

[*She casts the knife from her.*

THE WOMEN.

[*Sing with growing ecstasy.*

Let writings be burnt, and let bodies be slain;
The word shall remain—
The word shall remain!

[*They take* PUBLIA *into their midst and go out towards the country.*

THE PEOPLE BY THE FOUNTAIN.

Woe to us; the Galileans' God is the strongest!

OTHER VOICES.

What avail all our gods against this one?

OTHERS AGAIN.

No offering! No worship! 'Twill incense the terrible one against us.

JULIAN.

Oh fools! You fear to incense a man long dead,—a false prophet—you shall have proof of it. He is a liar, I say! Wait but a little longer. Every day, every hour, may bring tidings from Jerusalem——

JOVIAN, *much travel-stained, enters hastily, with a few followers, from the right.*

JOVIAN.

Most gracious Emperor, pardon your servant for seeking you here.

JULIAN.

[*With a cry of joy.*] Jovian! Oh welcome newsbearer!

JOVIAN.

I come direct from Judea. I learned at the palace that you were here——

JULIAN.

Oh, ever-praiseworthy gods,—yon setting sun shall not go down upon the lie. How far have you progressed? Speak, my Jovian!

JOVIAN.

[*With a glance at the crowd.*] Sire, shall I tell all?

JULIAN.

All, all—from first to last!

JOVIAN.

I arrived at Jerusalem with the architects and soldiers, and the two thousand workmen. We went to work at once to clear the ground. Mighty remnants of the walls remained. They fell before our pickaxes and crowbars so easily that it seemed as though some unseen power were helping us to efface them——

JULIAN.

You see! What did I tell you!

JOVIAN.

In the meantime immense heaps of mortar were being brought together for the new building. Then, without any warning, there arose a whirlwind, which spread the lime like a cloud over the whole region.

JULIAN.

Go on; go on!

JOVIAN.

The same night the earth shook repeatedly.

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

Hear that! The earth shook!

JULIAN.

Go on, I say!

JOVIAN.

We were nothing daunted by this strange event. But when we had dug so deep into the ground as to open the subterranean vaults, and the stonehewers went down to work by torchlight——

JULIAN.

Jovian,—what then?

JOVIAN.

Sire, a terrible, a monstrous stream of fire burst out of the caverns. A thundering noise shook the whole city. The vaults burst asunder; hundreds of workmen were killed in them, and the few who escaped fled with lacerated limbs.

WHISPERING VOICES.

The Galileans' God!

JULIAN.

Can I believe all this? Did you see it?

JOVIAN.

With my own eyes. We began anew. Sire, in the presence of many thousands—awestruck, kneeling, exulting, praying—the same wonder was twice repeated.

JULIAN.

[*Pale and trembling.*] And then——? In one word,—what has the Emperor achieved in Jerusalem?

JOVIAN.

The Emperor has fulfilled the Galilean's prophecy.

JULIAN.

Fulfilled——?

JOVIAN.

Through you is the saying accomplished: "Not one stone shall remain upon another."

MEN AND WOMEN.

The Galilean has overcome the Emperor! The Galilean is greater than Julian!

JULIAN.

[*To the priest of Cybele.*] You may go home, old man! And take your goose with you. We will have no sacrifice this evening. [*He turns to the crowd.*

I heard some say the Galilean had conquered. It may appear so; but I tell you it is a delusion. Oh senseless clods; oh contemptible dolts,—believe me, it will not be long before the tables are turned! I will——; I will——! Ah, only wait! I am already collecting material for a treatise against the Galilean. It is to be seen in seven chapters; and when his followers have read that,—and when "The Beard-Hater," too——

Give me your arm, Fromentinus! This defiance has wearied me. [*To the guard, as he passes the fountain.*

Set Cyrillus free!

[*He returns with his retinue to the city.*

THE CROWD AT THE FOUNTAIN.

[*Shouting after him with scornful laughter.*] There goes the altar-butcher!—There goes the ragged bear!—There goes the ape with the long arms!

SCENE FOURTH

Moonlight. Among the ruins of the temple of Apollo. The EMPEROR JULIAN *and* MAXIMUS THE MYSTIC, *both in robes, appear among the overthrown columns.*

MAXIMUS.

Whither, my brother?

JULIAN.

Where it is loneliest.

MAXIMUS.

But here—in this desolation? Among these rubbish-heaps——?

JULIAN.

Is not the whole earth a rubbish-heap?

MAXIMUS.

Yet you have shown that what has fallen can be restored.

JULIAN.

Mocker! In Athens I saw how a cobbler had made himself a little workshop in the temple of Theseus. In Rome, I hear, a corner of the Basilica Julia is used for a bullock-stable. Call you t h a t restoration?

MAXIMUS.

Why not? Does not everything happen little by little? What is a whole but the sum of all the parts?

JULIAN.

Foolish wisdom!

[*He points to the overturned statue of Apollo.*

See this noseless face. See this splintered elbow,—these shattered loins. Does the sum of all these deformities restore to us the divine perfection of bygone beauty?

MAXIMUS.

How know you that that bygone beauty was beautiful —in itself—apart from the spectator's idea?

JULIAN.

Ah, Maximus, t h a t is just the question. What e x i s t s in itself? After to-day I know of nothing.

[*He kicks the head of Apollo.*

Have you ever been mightier, in yourself?

Strange, Maximus, that there should dwell such strength in delusion. Look at those Galileans. And look at me in the old days, when I thought it possible to build up again the fallen world of beauty.

MAXIMUS.

Friend—if delusion be a necessity to you, return to the Galileans. They will receive you with open arms.

JULIAN.

You know well that that is impossible. Emperor and Galilean! How reconcile that contradiction?

Yes, this Jesus Christ is the greatest rebel that ever lived. What was Brutus—what was Cassius, compared with h i m? They murdered only the man Julius Caesar; but h e murders all that is called Caesar or Augustus. Is

peace conceivable between the Galilean and the Emperor? Is there room for the two of them together upon the earth? For he lives on the earth, Maximus,—the Galilean lives, I say, however thoroughly both Jews and Romans imagined that they had killed him; he lives in the rebellious minds of men; he lives in their scorn and defiance of all visible authority.

"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,—and to God the things that are God's!" Never has mouth of man uttered a craftier saying than that. What lies behind it? What, and how much, belongs to the Emperor? That saying is nothing but a bludgeon wherewith to strike the crown from off the Emperor's head.

MAXIMUS.

Yet the great Constantine knew how to compound matters with the Galilean—and your predecessor too.

JULIAN.

Yes, could one only be as easily satisfied as they! But call you t h a t ruling the empire of the world? Constantine widened the boundaries of his dominion, but did he not fix narrow boundaries to his spirit and his will? You rate that man too high when you call him "the great." Of my predecessor I will not speak; he was more slave than Emperor, and I cannot be contented with the name alone.

No, no, a truce is not to be thought of in this contest! And yet—to have to give way! Oh, Maximus, after these defeats I cannot retain the crown—yet neither can I renounce it.

You, Maximus, who can interpret omens whose mystic meaning is hidden from all others—you who can read the

volume of the eternal stars,—can you foretell the issue of this struggle?

MAXIMUS.

Yes, my brother, I can foretell the issue.

JULIAN.

Can you? Then tell me—! Who shall conquer? The Emperor or the Galilean?

MAXIMUS.

Both the Emperor and the Galilean shall succumb.

JULIAN.

Succumb——? Both——?

MAXIMUS.

Both. Whether in our times or in hundreds of years, I know not; but so it shall be when the right man comes.

JULIAN.

And who is the right man?

MAXIMUS.

He who shall swallow up both Emperor and Galilean.

JULIAN.

You solve the riddle by a still darker riddle.

MAXIMUS.

Hear me, brother and friend of truth! I say you shall both succumb—but not that you shall perish.

Does not the child succumb in the youth, and the youth in the man? Yet neither child nor youth perishes.

Oh, my best-loved pupil—have you forgotten all our discourse in Ephesus about the three empires?

JULIAN.

Ah Maximus, years have passed since then. Speak!

MAXIMUS.

You know I have never approved the course you have taken as Emperor. You have striven to make the youth a child again. The empire of the flesh is swallowed up in the empire of the spirit. But the empire of the spirit is not final, any more than the youth is. You have striven to hinder the growth of the youth,—to hinder him from becoming a man. Oh fool, who have drawn your sword against that which is to be—against the third empire, in which the twin-natured shall reign.

JULIAN.

And he——?

MAXIMUS.

The Jews have a name for him. They call him Messiah, and they await him.

JULIAN.

[*Slowly and thoughtfully.*] Messiah?—Neither Emperor nor Redeemer?

MAXIMUS.

Both in one, and one in both.

JULIAN.

Emperor-God—God-Emperor. Emperor in the kingdom of the spirit,—and God in that of the flesh.

MAXIMUS.

T h a t is the third empire, Julian!

JULIAN.

Yes, Maximus, t h a t is the third empire.

MAXIMUS.

In t h a t empire shall the present watchword of revolt be realised.

JULIAN.

"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,—and to God the things that are God's." Yes, yes, then the Emperor is in God, and God in the Emperor.—Ah, dreams, dreams,—who shall break the Galilean's power?

MAXIMUS.

Wherein lies the Galilean's power?

JULIAN.

I have brooded over that question in vain.

MAXIMUS.

Is it not somewhere written: "Thou shalt have none other gods but me"?

JULIAN.

Yes—yes—yes!

MAXIMUS.

The Seer of Nazareth did not preach this god or that; he said: "God is I;—I am God."

JULIAN.

Ay, this thing without me——! 'Tis that which makes the Emperor powerless.

The third empire? The Messiah? Not the Jews' Messiah, but the Messiah of the two empires, the spirit and the world——?

MAXIMUS.

The God-Emperor.

JULIAN.

The Emperor-God.

MAXIMUS.

Logos in Pan—Pan in Logos.

JULIAN.

Maximus,—how comes he into being?

MAXIMUS.

He comes into being in the man who wills himself.

JULIAN.

My beloved teacher,—I must leave you.

MAXIMUS.

Whither are you going?

JULIAN.

To the city. The Persian king has made overtures of peace, which I too hastily accepted. My envoys are already on the way. They must be overtaken and recalled.

MAXIMUS.

You will reopen the war against King Sapor?

JULIAN.

I will do what Cyrus dreamed of, and Alexander attempted——

MAXIMUS.

Julian!

JULIAN.

I will possess the world.—Good-night, my Maximus!

[*He makes a gesture of farewell, and goes hastily away.* MAXIMUS *looks thoughtfully after him.*

THE CHORUS OF THE PSALM-SINGERS.

[*Far away, beside the graves of the martyrs.*

Ye gods of the nations, of silver and gold,
Ye shall crumble to mould!

ACT FOURTH

SCENE FIRST

The eastern frontier of the empire. A wild mountain landscape. A deep valley separates the high foreground from the mountains behind.

The EMPEROR JULIAN, *in military dress, stands on the edge of a rocky promontory, and looks into the depths. A little way from him, to the left, stand* NEVITA, *the Persian prince* HORMISDAS, JOVIAN, *and several other generals. To the right, beside a roughly-built stone altar, crouch the soothsayer,* NUMA, *and two other Etruscan soothsayers, examining the entrails of the sacrifices for omens. Further forward sits* MAXIMUS THE MYSTIC *on a stone, surrounded by* PRISCUS, KYTRON, *and other philosophers. Small detachments of light-armed men now and then pass over the height from left to right.*

JULIAN.

[*Pointing downwards.*] See, see—the legions wind like a scaly serpent through the ravine.

NEVITA.

Those just below us, in sheepskin doublets, are the Scythians.

JULIAN.

What piercing howls——!

NEVITA.

That is the Scythians' customary song, sire!

JULIAN.

More howl than song.

NEVITA.

Now come the Armenians. Arsaces himself is leading them.

JULIAN.

The Roman legions must already be out on the plains. All the neighbouring tribes are hastening to make their submission. [*He turns to the officers.*

The twelve hundred ships, containing all our stores and munitions, lie assembled on the Euphrates. I am now fully assured that the fleet can cross over to the Tigris by the ancient canal. The whole army will pass the river by means of the ships. Then we will advance along by the eastern bank as rapidly as the current will suffer the ships to follow us.

Tell me, Hormisdas, what think you of this plan?

HORMISDAS.

Invincible general, I know that under your victorious protection it will be vouchsafed me to tread once more the soil of my fatherland.

JULIAN.

What a relief to be rid of those narrow-breasted citizens! What terror was in their eyes when they pressed round my chariot as I left the city! "Come again

quickly," they cried, "and be more gracious to us than now." I will never revisit Antioch. I will never again set eyes on that ungrateful city! When I have conquered I will return by way of Tarsus.

[*He goes up to the soothsayers.*

Numa,—what omens for our campaign do you find this morning?

NUMA.

The omens warn you not to pass the frontier of your empire this year.

JULIAN.

H'm! How read you this omen, Maximus?

MAXIMUS.

I read it thus: the omen counsels you to subdue all the regions you traverse; thus you will never pass the frontier of your empire.

JULIAN.

So is it. We must look closely into such supernatural signs; for there is wont to be a double meaning in them. It even seems at times as if mysterious powers took a delight in leading men astray, especially in great undertakings. Were there not some who held it an evil omen that the colonnade in Hierapolis fell in and buried half a hundred soldiers, just as we marched through the city? But I say that that is a presage of a twofold good. In the first place it foreshows the downfall of Persia, and in the second place the doom of the unhappy Galileans. For what soldiers were they who were killed? Why, Galilean convict-soldiers, who went most unwillingly to

the war; and therefore fate decreed them that sudden and inglorious end.

JOVIAN.

Most gracious Emperor, here comes a captain from the vanguard.

AMMIAN.

[*Entering from the right.*] Sire, you commanded me to inform you should anything strange befall during our advance.

JULIAN.

Well? Has anything happened this morning?

AMMIAN.

Yes, sire, two portents.

JULIAN.

Quick, Ammian,—speak on!

AMMIAN.

First, sire, it happened that when we had gone a little way beyond the village of Zaita, a lion of monstrous size burst from a thicket and rushed straight at our soldiers, who killed it with many arrows.

JULIAN.

Ah!

THE PHILOSOPHERS.

What a fortunate omen!

HORMISDAS.

King Sapor calls himself the lion of the nations.

NUMA.

[*Busied at the altar.*] Turn back; turn back, Emperor Julian!

MAXIMUS.

Go fearlessly forward, chosen son of victory!

JULIAN.

Turn back after this? As the lion fell at Zaita, so shall the lion of the nations fall before our arrows. Does not history warrant me in interpreting this omen to our advantage? Need I remind such learned men that when the Emperor Maximian conquered the Persian king, Narses, a lion, and a huge wild boar besides, were, in like manner, slain in front of the Roman ranks?

[*To* AMMIAN.

But now the other——? You spoke of two signs.

AMMIAN.

The other is more doubtful, sire! Your charger, Babylonius, was led forth, as you commanded, fully equipped, to await your descent on the other side of the mountain. But just at that time a detachment of Galilean convict-soldiers happened to pass. Heavily laden as they were, and by no means overwilling, they had to be driven with scourges. Nevertheless they lifted up their arms as in rejoicing, and burst forth into a loud hymn in praise of their deity. Babylonius was startled by the sudden noise, reared in his fright, and fell backwards; and as he

sprawled upon the ground, all his golden trappings were soiled and bespattered with mud.

NUMA.

[*At the altar.*] Emperor Julian,—turn back, turn back!

JULIAN.

The Galileans must have done this out of malice,—and yet, in spite of themselves, they have brought to pass a portent which I hail with delight.

Yes, as Babylonius fell, so shall Babylon fall, stripped of all the splendour of its adornments.

PRISCUS.

What wisdom in interpretation!

KYTRON.

By the gods, it must be so!

THE OTHER PHILOSOPHERS.

So, and not otherwise!

JULIAN.

[*To* NEVITA.] The army shall continue to advance. Nevertheless, for still greater security, I will sacrifice this evening and see what the omens indicate.

As for you Etruscan jugglers, whom I have brought hither at so great a cost, I will no longer suffer you in the camp, where you serve only to damp the soldiers' spirits. You know nothing of the difficult calling you pro-

fess. What effrontery! What measureless presumption! Away with them! I will not set eyes on them again.

[*Some of the guards drive the Soothsayers out to the left.*

Babylonius fell. The lion succumbed before my soldiers. Yet these things do not tell us what invisible help we have to depend upon. The gods, whose essence is as yet by no means duly ascertained, seem sometimes—if I may say so—to slumber, or, on the whole, to concern themselves very little with human affairs. We, my dear friends, are so unfortunate as to live in such an age. We have even seen how certain divinities have neglected to support well-meant endeavours, tending to their own honour and glory.

Yet must we not judge rashly in this matter. It is conceivable that the immortals, who guide and uphold the universe, may sometimes depute their power to mortal hands,—not thereby, assuredly, lessening their own glory; for it is not thanks to them that so highly-favoured[1] a mortal—if he exist—has been born into this world?

PRISCUS.

Oh matchless Emperor, do not your own achievements afford proof of this?

JULIAN.

I know not, Priscus, whether I dare rate my own achievements so highly. I say nothing of the fact that

[1] The original edition here reads "benådet," and this reading is followed in the translation. In the collected edition of Ibsen's works (Copenhagen 1899) the word becomes "beåndet," which is probably a misprint, but may, on the other hand, be a correction. In that case, for "highly-favoured" we should have to read "specially inspired." Ibsen uses the word "beåndet" several times in "Hedda Gabler."

the Galileans believe the Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, to have been thus elected; for these men err—as I shall conclusively establish in my treatise against them. But I will remind you of Prometheus in ancient days. Did not that pre-eminent hero procure for mankind still greater blessings than the gods seemed to vouchsafe—wherefore we had to suffer much, both pain and despiteful usage, till he was at last exalted to the communion of the gods—to which, in truth, he had all the while belonged?

And may not the same be said both of Herakles and of Achilles, and, finally, of the Macedonian Alexander, with whom some have compared me, partly on account of what I achieved in Gaul, partly, and especially, on account of my designs in the present campaign?

NEVITA.

My Emperor—the rear-guard is now beneath us—it is perhaps time——

JULIAN.

Presently, Nevita! First I must tell you of a strange dream I had last night.

I dreamed that I saw a child pursued by a rich man who owned countless flocks, but despised the worship of the gods.

This wicked man exterminated all the child's kindred. But Zeus took pity on the child itself, and held his hand over it.

Then I saw this child grow up into a youth, under the care of Minerva and Apollo.

Further, I dreamed that the youth fell asleep upon a stone beneath the open sky.

Then Hermes descended to him, in the likeness of a

young man, and said: "Come; I will show thee the way to the abode of the highest god!" So he led the youth to the foot of a very steep mountain. There he left him.

Then the youth burst out into tears and lamentations, and called with a loud voice upon Zeus. Lo, then, Minerva and the Sun-King who rules the earth descended to his side, bore him aloft to the peak of the mountain, and showed him the whole inheritance of his race.

But this inheritance was the orb of the earth from ocean to ocean, and beyond the ocean.

Then they told the youth that all this should belong to him. And therewith they gave him three warnings: he should not sleep, as his race had done; he should not hearken to the counsel of hypocrites; and, lastly, he should honour as gods those who resemble the gods. "Forget not," they said, on leaving him, "that thou hast an immortal soul, and that this thy soul is of divine origin. And if thou follow our counsel thou shalt see our father and become a god, even as we."

PRISCUS.

What are signs and omens to this!

KYTRON.

It can scarcely be rash to anticipate that the Fates will think twice ere they suffer their counsels to clash with yours.

JULIAN.

We dare not build with certainty on such an exception. But assuredly I cannot but find this dream significant, although my brother Maximus, by his silence—against all reasonable expectation—seems to approve neither of the

dream itself, nor of my relation of it.—But that we must bear with! [*He takes out a roll of paper.*

See, Jovian; before I arose this morning, I noted down what I had dreamt. Take this paper, let numerous copies of it be made, and read to the various divisions of the army. I hold it of the utmost moment, on so hazardous an expedition, that, amid all dangers and difficulties, the soldiers may leave their fate securely in their leader's hands, considering him infallible in all that concerns the issue of the war.

JOVIAN.

I pray you, my Emperor, let me be excused from this.

JULIAN.

What do you mean?

JOVIAN.

That I cannot lend my aid to anything that is against the truth.—Oh, hear me, my august Emperor and master! Is there a single one of your soldiers who doubts that he is safe in your hands? Have you not, on the Gallic frontier, in spite of overwhelming numbers and difficulties of all kinds, gained greater victories than any other living commander can boast of?

JULIAN.

Well, well! What startling news!

JOVIAN.

All know how marvellously fortune has hitherto followed you. In learning you excel all other mortals, and

in the glorious art of eloquence you bear the palm among the greatest.

JULIAN.

And yet——? In spite of all this——?

JOVIAN.

In spite of all this, my Emperor, you are but mortal. By publishing this dream through the army you would seek to make men deem you a god,—and in that I dare not assist you.

JULIAN.

What say you, my friends, to this speech?

KYTRON.

It assuredly shows no less effrontery than ignorance.

JULIAN.

You seem to forget, oh truth-loving Jovian, that the Emperor Antoninus, surnamed the Pious, has been worshipped in a special temple on the Roman forum as an immortal god. And not he alone, but also his wife, Faustina, and other Emperors before and after him.

JOVIAN.

I know it, sire,—but it was not given to our forefathers to live in the light of truth.

JULIAN.

[*With a long look at him.*] Ah, Jovian!——

Tell me,—last evening, when I was taking the omens for the coming night, you brought me a message just

as I was laving the blood from my hands in the water of purification——

JOVIAN.

Yes, my Emperor!

JULIAN.

In my haste, I chanced to sprinkle a few drops of the water on your cloak. You shrank sharply backward and shook the water off, as if your cloak had been defiled.

JOVIAN.

My Emperor,—so that did not escape you?

JULIAN.

Did you think it would have escaped me?

JOVIAN.

Yes, sire; for it was a matter between me and the one true God.

JULIAN.

Galilean!

JOVIAN.

Sire, you yourself sent me to Jerusalem, and I was witness to all that happened there. I have pondered much since then; I have read the scriptures of the Christians, have spoken with many of them,—and now I am convinced that in their teaching lies the truth of God.

JULIAN.

Is this possible? Can it be possible? Thus does this infectious frenzy spread! Even those nearest me—my own generals desert me——

JOVIAN.

Place me in the van against your foes, sire,—and you shall see how gladly I render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

JULIAN.

How much——?

JOVIAN.

My blood, my life.

JULIAN.

Blood and life are not enough. He who is to rule must rule over the minds, over the wills of men. It is in this that your Jesus of Nazareth bars my way and contests my power.

Think not that I will punish you, Jovian! You Galileans covet punishment as a benefaction. And after it you are called martyrs. Have they not thus exalted those whom I have been obliged to chastise for their obduracy?

Go to the vanguard! I will not willingly see your face again.—Oh, this treachery to me, which you veil in phrases about double duty and a double empire! This shall be altered. Other kings besides the Persian shall feel my foot on their necks.

To the vanguard, Jovian!

JOVIAN.

I shall do my duty, sire! [*He goes out to the right.*

JULIAN.

We will not have this morning darkened, which rose amid so many happy omens. This, and more, will we

bear with an even mind. But my dream shall none the less be published through the army. You, Kytron, and you, my Priscus, and my other friends, will see that this is done in a becoming manner.

THE PHILOSOPHERS.

With joy, with unspeakable joy, sire!

[*They take the roll and go out to the right.*

JULIAN.

I beg you, Hormisdas, not to doubt my power, although it may seem as though stubbornness met me on every hand. Go; and you too, Nevita, and all the rest, each to his post;—I will follow when the troops are all gathered out on the plains.

[*All except the* EMPEROR *and* MAXIMUS *go out to the right.*

MAXIMUS.

[*After a time, rises from the stone where he has been seated and goes up to the Emperor.*] My sick brother!

JULIAN.

Rather wounded than sick. The deer that is pierced by the hunter's shaft seeks the thicket where its fellows cannot see it. I could no longer endure to be seen in the streets of Antioch;—and now I shrink from showing myself to the army.

MAXIMUS.

No one sees you, friend; for they grope in blindness. But you shall be as a physician to restore their sight, and then they shall behold you in your glory.

JULIAN.

[*Gazing down into the ravine.*] How far beneath us! How tiny they seem, as they wind their way forward, amid thicket and brushwood, along the rocky river-bed!

When we stood at the mouth of this defile, all the leaders, as one man, made for the pass. It meant an hour's way shortened, a little trouble spared,—on the road to death.

And the legions were so eager to follow. No thought of taking the upward path, no longing for the free air up here, where the bosom expands with each deep draught of breath. There they march, and march, and march, and see not that the heaven is straitened above them,—and know not there are heights where it is wider.—Seems it not, Maximus, as though men lived but to die? The spirit of the Galilean is in this. If it be true, as they say, that his father made the world, then the son contemns his father's work. And it is just for this presumptuous frenzy that he is so highly revered!

How great was Socrates compared with him! Did not Socrates love pleasure, and happiness, and beauty? And yet he renounced them.—Is there not a bottomless abyss between not desiring, on the one hand, and, on the other, desiring, yet renouncing?

Oh, this treasure of lost wisdom I would fain have restored to men. Like Dionysus of old, I went forth to meet them, young and joyous, a garland on my brow, and the fulness of the vine in my arms. But they reject my gifts, and I am scorned, and hated, and derided, by friends and foes alike.

MAXIMUS.

Why? I will tell you why.

Hard by a certain town where once I lived, there was

a vineyard, renowned far and wide for its grapes; and when the citizens wished to have the finest fruits on their tables, they sent their servants out to bring clusters from this vineyard.

Many years after I came again to that city; but no one knew aught of the grapes that were once so renowned. Then I sought the owner of the vineyard and said to him, "Tell me, friend, are your vines dead, since no one now knows aught of your grapes?" "No," he answered, "but let me tell you, young vines yield good grapes but poor wine; old vines, on the contrary, bad grapes but good wine. Therefore, stranger," he added, "I still gladden the hearts of my fellow citizens with the abundance of my vineyard, only in another form—as wine, not as grapes."

JULIAN.

[*Thoughtfully.*] Yes, yes, yes!

MAXIMUS.

You have not given heed to this. The vine of the world has grown old, and yet you think that you can still offer the raw grapes to those who thirst for the new wine.

JULIAN.

Alas, my Maximus, who thirsts? Name me a single man, outside our brotherhood, who is moved by a spiritual craving.—Unhappy I, to be born into this iron age!

MAXIMUS.

Do not reproach the age. Had the age been greater, you would have been less. The world-soul is like a rich man with innumerable sons. If he share his riches

equally, all are well to do, but none rich. But if he disinherit all but one, and give everything to him, then that one stands as a rich man amid a circle of paupers.

JULIAN.

No similitude could be less apt than this.—Am I like your single heir? Is not that very thing divided among many which the ruler of the world should possess in fuller measure than all besides—nay, which he alone should possess? Oh how is not power divided? Has not Libanius the power of eloquence in such fulness that men call him the king of orators? Have not you, my Maximus, the power of mystic wisdom? Has not that madman Apollinaris of Antioch the power of ecstatic song in a measure I needs must envy him? And then Gregory the Cappadocian! Has he not the power of indomitable will in such excess, that many have applied to him the epithet, unbecoming for a subject, of "the Great"? And—what is stranger still—the same epithet has been applied to Gregory's friend, Basil, the soft-natured man with girlish eyes. And yet he plays no active part in the world; he lives h e r e, this Basil—here in this remote region, wearing the habit of an anchorite, and holding converse with none but his disciples, his sister Makrina, and other women who are called pious and holy. What influence do they not exert, both he and his sister, through the epistles they send forth from time to time. Everything, even renunciation and seclusion, becomes a power to oppose my power. But the crucified Jew is still the worst of all.

MAXIMUS.

Then make an end of all these scattered powers! But dream not that you can crush the rebels, by attack-

ing them in the name of a monarch whom they do not know. In your own name you must act, Julian! Did Jesus of Nazareth come as the emissary of another? Did he not proclaim himself to be one with him that sent him? Truly in you is the time fulfilled, and you see it not. Do not all signs and omens point, with unerring finger, to you? Must I remind you of your mother's dream——?

JULIAN.

She dreamed that she brought forth Achilles.

MAXIMUS.

Must I remind you how fortune has borne you, as on mighty pinions, through an agitated and perilous life? Who are you, sire? Are you Alexander born again, not, as before, in immaturity, but perfectly equipped for the fulfilment of the task?

JULIAN.

Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

There is One who ever reappears, at certain intervals, in the course of human history. He is like a rider taming a wild horse in the arena. Again and yet again it throws him. A moment, and he is in the saddle again, each time more secure and more expert; but off he has had to go, in all his varying incarnations, until this day. Off he had to go as the god-created man in Eden's grove; off he had to go as the founder of the world-empire;—off he m u s t go as the prince of the empire of God. Who knows how often he has wandered among us when none have recognised him?

How know you, Julian, that you were not in him whom you now persecute?

JULIAN.

[*Looking far away.*] Oh unfathomable riddle——!

MAXIMUS.

Must I remind you of the old prophecy now set afloat again? It has been foretold that so many years as the year has days should the empire of the Galilean endure. Two years more, and 'twill be three hundred and sixty-five years since that man was born in Bethlehem.

JULIAN.

Do you believe this prophecy?

MAXIMUS.

I believe in him who is to come.

JULIAN.

Always riddles!

MAXIMUS.

I believe in the free necessity.

JULIAN.

Still darker riddles.

MAXIMUS.

Behold, Julian,—when Chaos seethed in the fearful void abyss, and Jehovah was alone,—that day when he, according to the old Jewish scriptures, stretched forth his hand and divided light from darkness, sea from land,

—that day the great creating God stood on the summit of his power.

But with man arose will upon the earth. And men, and beasts, and trees, and herbs re-created themselves, each in its own image, according to eternal laws; and by eternal laws the stars roll through the heavenly spaces.

Did Jehovah repent? The ancient traditions of all races tell of a repentant Creator.

He had established the law of perpetuation in the universe. Too late to repent! The created will perpetuate itself—and is perpetuated.

But the two one-sided empires war one against the other. Where, where is he, the king of peace, the twin-sided one, who shall reconcile them?

JULIAN.

[*To himself.*] Two years? All the gods inactive. No capricious power behind, which might bethink itself to cross my plans——

Two years? In two years I can bring the earth under my sway.

MAXIMUS.

You spoke, my Julian;—what said you?

JULIAN.

I am young and strong and healthy. Maximus—it is my will to live long.

[*He goes out to the right.* MAXIMUS *follows him.*

SCENE SECOND

A hilly wooded region with a brook among the trees. On an elevation a little farm. It is towards sunset. Columns of soldiers pass from left to right at the foot of the slope. BASIL OF CAESAREA, *and his sister* MAKRINA, *both in the dress of hermits, stand by the wayside and offer water and fruits to the weary soldiers.*

MAKRINA.

Oh, Basil, see—each paler and more haggard than the last!

BASIL.

And countless multitudes of our Christian brethren among them! Woe to the Emperor Julian! This is a cruelty more cunningly contrived than all the horrors of the torture-chamber. Against whom is he leading his hosts? Less against the Persian king than against Christ.

MAKRINA.

Do you believe this dreadful thing of him?

BASIL.

Yes, Makrina, it becomes more and more clear to me that 'tis against u s the blow is aimed. All the defeats he has suffered in Antioch, all the resistance he has met with, all the disappointments and humiliations he has had to endure on his ungodly path, he hopes to bury in oblivion by means of a victorious campaign. And he will succeed. A great victory will blot out everything. Men

are fashioned so; they see right in success, and before might most of them will bend.

MAKRINA.

[*Pointing out to the left.*] Fresh multitudes! Innumerable, unceasing——

[*A company of soldiers passes by; a young man in the ranks sinks down on the road from weariness.*

A SUBALTERN.

[*Beating him with a stick.*] Up with you, lazy hound!

MAKRINA.

[*Hastening up.*] Oh, do not strike him!

THE SOLDIER.

Let them strike me;—I am so glad to suffer.

AMMIAN.

[*Entering.*] Again a stoppage!—Oh, it is he. Can he really go no further?

THE SUBALTERN.

I do not know what to say, sir; he falls at every step.

MAKRINA.

Oh, be patient! Who is this unhappy man?—See, suck the juice of these fruits.—Who is he, sir?

AMMIAN.

A Cappadocian,—one of the fanatics who took part in the desecration of the temple of Venus at Antioch.

MAKRINA.

Oh, one of those martyrs——.

AMMIAN.

Try to rise, Agathon! I am sorry for this fellow. They chastised him more severely than he could bear. He has been out of his mind ever since.

AGATHON.

[*Rising.*] I can bear it very well, and I am in my right mind, sir! Strike, strike, strike;—I rejoice to suffer.

AMMIAN.

[*To the Subaltern.*] Forward; we have no time to waste.

THE SUBALTERN.

[*To the soldiers.*] Forward, forward!

AGATHON.

Babylonius fell;—soon shall the Babylonian whoremonger fall likewise. The lion of Zaita was slain—the crowned lion of the earth is doomed!

[*The soldiers are driven out to the right.*

AMMIAN.

[*To* BASIL *and* MAKRINA.] You strange people;—you go astray and yet you do good. Thanks for your refreshment to the weary; and would that my duty to the Emperor permitted me to treat your brethren as forbearingly as I should desire.

[*He goes off to the right.*

BASIL.

God be with you, noble heathen!

MAKRINA.

Who may that man be?

BASIL.

I know him not.

[*He points to the left.*

Oh see, see—there he is himself!

MAKRINA.

The Emperor? Is t h a t the Emperor?

BASIL.

Yes, that is he.

The EMPEROR JULIAN *with several of his principal officers, escorted by a detachment of guards, with their captain* ANATOLUS, *enters from the left.*

JULIAN.

[*To his retinue.*] Why talk of fatigue? Should the fall of a horse bring me to a standstill? Or is it less becoming to go on foot than to bestride an inferior animal? Fatigue! My ancestor said that it befits an Emperor to die standing. I say that it befits an Emperor, not only in the hour of death but throughout his whole life, to set an example of endurance; I say—— Ah, by the great light of heaven! do I not see Basil of Caesarea before my eyes?

BASIL.

[*Bowing deeply.*] Your meanest servant, oh most mighty lord!

JULIAN.

Ah, I know what that means! Truly you serve me well, Basil! [*Approaching.*

So this is the villa that has become so renowned by reason of the epistles that go forth from it. This house is more talked of throughout the provinces than all the lecture-halls together, although I have spared neither care nor pains to restore their glory.

Tell me—is not this woman your sister, Makrina?

BASIL.

She is, sire!

JULIAN.

You are a fair woman, and still young. And yet, as I hear, you have renounced life.

MAKRINA.

Sire, I have renounced life in order truly to live.

JULIAN.

Ah, I know your delusions very well. You sigh for that which lies beyond, of which you have no certain knowledge; you mortify your flesh; you repress all human desires. And yet I tell you this may be a vanity, like the rest.

BASIL.

Think not, sire, that I am blind to the danger that lurks in renunciation. I know that my friend Gregory says well when he writes that he holds himself a hermit

in heart, though not in the body. And I know that this coarse clothing is of small profit to my soul if I take merit to myself for wearing it.

But that is not my case. This secluded life fills me with unspeakable happiness; that is all. The wild convulsions through which, in these days, the world is passing, do not here force themselves, in all their hideousness, upon my eyes. Here I feel my body uplifted in prayer, and my soul purified by a frugal life.

JULIAN.

Oh my modest Basil, I fear you are ambitious of more than this. If what I hear be true, your sister has gathered round her a band of young women whom she is training up in her own likeness. And you yourself, like your Galilean master, have chosen twelve disciples. What is your purpose with them?

BASIL.

To send them forth into all lands, that may strengthen our brethren in the fight.

JULIAN.

Truly! Equipped with all the weapons of eloquence, you send your army against me. And whence did you obtain this eloquence, this glorious Greek art? From our schools of learning. What right have you to it? You have stolen like a spy into our camp, to find out where you can most safely strike at us. And this knowledge you are now applying to our greatest hurt!

Let me tell you, Basil, that I have no mind to suffer this scandal any longer. I will strike this weapon out of your hands. Keep to your Matthew and Luke, and

other such unpolished babblers. But henceforth you shall not be permitted to interpret our ancient poets and philosophers; for I hold it unreasonable to let you suck knowledge and skill from sources in the truth of which you do not believe. In like manner shall all Galilean scholars be forbidden our lecture-halls; for what is their business there? To steal our weapons and use them against us.

BASIL.

Sire, I have already heard of this strange determination. And I agree with Gregory in maintaining that you have no exclusive right either to Grecian learning or to Grecian eloquence. I agree with him when he points out that y o u use the alphabet which was invented by the Egyptians, and that you clothe yourself in purple, although it first came into use among the people of Tyre.

Ay, sire—and more than that. You subdue nations, and make yourself ruler over peoples, whose tongues are unknown and whose manners are strange to you. And you have a right to do so. But by the same right whereby you rule the visible world, he whom you call the Galilean rules the invisible——

JULIAN.

Enough of that! I will no longer listen to such talk. You speak as though there were two rulers of the world, and on that plea you cry halt to me at every turn. Oh fools! You set up a dead man against a living one. But you shall soon be convinced of your error. Do not suppose that amid the cares of war I have laid aside the treatise I have long been preparing against you. Perhaps you think I spend my nights in sleep? You are mistaken! For "The Beard-Hater" I reaped nothing

but scorn,—and that from the very people who had most reason to lay certain truths to heart. But that shall in nowise deter me. Should a man with a cudgel in his hand shrink from a pack of yelping dogs?—Why did you smile, woman? At what did you laugh?

MAKRINA.

Why, sire, do you rage so furiously against one who, you say, is dead?

JULIAN.

Ah, I understand! You mean to say that he is alive.

MAKRINA.

I mean to say, oh mighty Emperor, that in your heart vou feel of a surety that he lives.

JULIAN.

I? What next! *I* feel——!

MAKRINA.

What is it that you hate and persecute? Not him, but your belief in him. And does he not live in your hate and persecution, no less than in our love?

JULIAN.

I know your tortuous tricks of speech. You Galileans say one thing and mean another. And that you call rhetoric! Oh mediocre minds! What folly! *I* feel that the crucified Jew is alive! Oh what a degenerate age, to find satisfaction in such sophistries! But such is the latter-day world. Madness passes for wisdom. How many

sleepless nights have I not spent in searching out the true foundation of things? But where are my followers? Many praise my eloquence, but few, or none, are convinced by it.

But truly the end is not yet. A great astonishment will come upon you. You shall see how all the scattered forces are converging into one. You shall see how, from all that you now despise, glory shall issue forth—and out of the cross on which you hang your hopes I will fashion a ladder for One whom you know not of.

MAKRINA.

And I tell you, Emperor Julian, that you are nought but a scourge in the hand of God—a scourge foredoomed to chasten us by reason of our sins. Woe to us that it must be so! Woe to us for the discords and the lovelessness that have caused us to swerve from the true path!

There was no longer a king in Israel. Therefore has the Lord stricken you with madness, that you might chastise us.

What a spirit has he not darkened, that it should rage against us! What a blossoming tree has he not stripped to make rods for our sin-laden shoulders!

Portents warned you, and you heeded them not. Voices called you, and you heard them not. Hands wrote in letters of fire upon the wall, and you rubbed out the writing ere you had deciphered it.

JULIAN.

Basil—I would I had known this woman before to-day.

BASIL.

Come, Makrina!

MAKRINA.

Woe is me that ever I saw those shining eyes! Angel and serpent in one; the apostate's longing wedded to the tempter's guile! Oh, how have our brethren and sisters borne their hope of victory so high, in the face of such an instrument of wrath? In him dwells a greater than he. Do you not see it, Basil—in him will the Lord God smite us even to death.

JULIAN.

You have said it!

MAKRINA.

Not I!

JULIAN.

First-won soul!

MAKRINA.

Avaunt from me!

BASIL.

Come—come!

JULIAN.

Stay here!—Anatolus, set a guard about them!—'Tis my will that you shall follow the army—both you and your disciples,—youths and women.

BASIL.

Sire, you cannot desire this!

JULIAN.

'Tis not wise to leave fortresses in our rear. See, I stretch forth my hand and quench the burning shower of arrows which you have sent forth from yonder villa.

BASIL.

Nay, nay, sire—this deed of violence——

MAKRINA.

Alas, Basil—here or elsewhere—all is over!

JULIAN.

Is it not written "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's"? I require all aid in this campaign. You can tend my sick and wounded. In that you will be serving the Galilean as well; and if you still think that a duty, I counsel you to make good use of your time. His end is near!

[*Some soldiers have surrounded* BASIL *and* MAKRINA, *others hasten through the thicket towards the house.*

MAKRINA.

Sunset over our home; sunset of hope and of light in the world! Oh Basil! that we should live to see the night!

BASIL.

The light is.

JULIAN.

The light shall be. Turn your backs to the sunset, Galileans! Your faces to the east, to the east, where Helios lies dreaming. Verily I say unto you, you shall see the Sun-King of the world.

[*He goes out to the right; all follow him.*

SCENE THIRD

Beyond the Euphrates and Tigris. A wide plain, with the imperial camp. Copses, to the left and in the background, hide the windings of the Tigris. Masts of ships rise over the thickets in long rows, stretching into the far distance. A cloudy evening.

Soldiers and men-at-arms of all sorts are busy pitching their tents on the plain. All kinds of stores are being brought from the ships. Watchfires far away.

NEVITA, JOVIAN, *and other officers come from the fleet.*

NEVITA.

See, now, how rightly the Emperor has chosen! Here we stand, without a stroke, on the enemy's territory; no one has opposed our passage of the river; not even a single Persian horseman is to be seen.

JOVIAN.

No, sir, by this route, the enemy certainly did not expect us.

NEVITA.

You speak as if you still thought this route unwisely chosen.

JOVIAN.

Yes, sir, it is still my opinion that we should rather have taken a more northerly direction. Then our left wing would have rested on Armenia, which is friendly towards us, and all our supplies might have come from that fruitful province. But here? Hampered in our

progress by the heavy freight-ships, surrounded by a barren plain, almost a desert—— Ah! the Emperor is coming. I will go; I am not in his good graces at present.

He goes out to the right. At the same time JULIAN *enters with his retinue from the ships.* ORIBASES, *the physician, the philosophers* PRISCUS *and* KYTRON, *with several others, appear from among the tents on the right, and advance to meet the Emperor.*

JULIAN.

Thus does the empire grow. Every step I take towards the east shifts the frontier of my dominion.

[*He stamps on the earth.*

This earth is mine! I am in the empire, not beyond it.—Well, Priscus——?

PRISCUS.

Incomparable Emperor, your command has been executed. Your marvellous dream has been read to every division of the army.

JULIAN.

Good, good. And how did my dream seem to affect the soldiers?

KYTRON.

Some praised you with joyful voices, and hailed you as divine; others on the contrary——

PRISCUS.

Those others were Galileans, Kytron!

KYTRON.

Yes, yes, most of them were Galileans; and these smote upon their breasts and uttered loud lamentations.

JULIAN.

I will not let the matter rest here. The busts of myself, which I have provided for erection in the towns I am to conquer, shall be set up round the camp, over all the paymasters' tables. Lamps shall be lighted beside the busts; braziers, with sweet-smelling incense, shall burn before them; and every soldier, as he comes forward to receive his pay, shall cast some grains of incense on the fire.

ORIBASES.

Most gracious Emperor, forgive me, but—is that expedient?

JULIAN.

Why not? I marvel at you, my Oribases!

PRISCUS.

Ah, sire, you may well marvel? Not expedient to——?

KYTRON.

Should not a Julian dare what less god-like men have dared?

JULIAN.

I, too, think that the more daring course would now be to disguise the counsels of the mystic powers. If it be the case that the divinities have deputed their sovereignty into earthly hands—as many signs justify us in concluding—it would indeed be most ungrateful to conceal the

fact. In such hazardous circumstances as these, 'tis no trifling matter that the soldiers should pay their devotions in a quite different quarter from that in which they are due.

I tell you, Oribases, and all of you,—if, indeed, there be present any one else who would set limits to the Emperor's power,—that this would be the very essence of impiety, and that I should therefore be forced to take strong measures against it.

Has not Plato long ago enunciated the truth that only a god can rule over men? What meant he by that saying? Answer me—what did he mean? Far be it from me to assert that Plato—incomparable sage though he was—had any individual, even the greatest, in his prophetic eye. But I think we have all seen what disorders result from the parcelling out, as it were, of the supreme power into several hands.

Enough of that. I have already commanded that the imperial busts shall be displayed about the camp.

Ah! what seek you in such haste, Eutherius?

The Chamberlain EUTHERIUS *comes from the ships, accompanied by a man in girt-up garments.*

EUTHERIUS.

Exalted Emperor,—this man of Antioch is sent by the governor, Alexander, and brings you a letter which, he says, is of great importance.

JULIAN.

Ah, let me see! Light here!

[*A torch is brought; the Emperor opens and reads the letter.*

JULIAN.

Can this be possible! More light! Yes, here it is written—and here—; what next?—Truly this exceeds all I could have conceived!

NEVITA.

Bad news from the west, sire?

JULIAN.

Nevita, tell me, how long will it take us to reach Ctesiphon?

NEVITA.

It cannot be done in less than thirty days.

JULIAN.

It must be done in less! Thirty days! A whole month! And while we are creeping forward here, I must let those madmen——

NEVITA.

You know yourself, sire, that, on account of the ships, we must follow all the windings of the river. The current is rapid, and the bed, too, shallow and stony. I hold it impossible to proceed more quickly.

JULIAN.

Thirty days! And then there is the city to be taken, -the Persian army to be routed,—peace to be concluded. What a time all this will take! Yet there were some among you foolish enough to urge upon me an even more roundabout route. Ha-ha; they would compass my ruin!

NEVITA.

Never fear, sire; the expedition shall advance with all possible speed.

JULIAN.

It must indeed. Can you imagine what Alexander tells me? The frenzy of the Galileans has passed all bounds since my departure. And it increases day by day. They understand that my victory in Persia will bring their extirpation in its train; and with that shameless Gregory as their leader, they now stand like a hostile army in my rear; in the Phrygian regions secret things are preparing, no one knows to what end——

NEVITA.

What does this mean, sire? What are they doing?

JULIAN.

What are they doing? Praying, preaching, singing, prophesying the end of the world. And would that that were all!—but they carry our adherents away, and entice them into their rebellious conspiracies. In Caesarea the congregation has chosen the judge Eusebius to be their bishop,—Eusebius, an unbaptised man—and he has been so misguided as to accept their call, which, moreover, the canon of their own church declares invalid.

But that is far from being the worst; worse, worse, ten times worse is it, that Athanasius has returned to Alexandria.

NEVITA.

Athanasius!

PRISCUS.

That mysterious bishop who, six years ago, vanished into the desert.

JULIAN.

A council of the church expelled him on account of his unseemly zeal. The Galileans were tractable under my predecessor.

Yes, just think of it—this raging fanatic has returned to Alexandria. His entrance was like a king's; the road was strewn with carpets and green palm-branches. And what followed? What do you think? The same night a riot broke out among the Galileans. George, their lawful bishop, that right-minded and well-disposed man, whom they accused of lukewarmness in the faith, was murdered—torn to pieces in the streets of the city.

NEVITA.

But, sire, how were things suffered to go so far? Where was the governor, Artemius?

JULIAN.

You may well ask where Artemius was. I will tell you. Artemius has gone over to the Galileans. Artemius himself has broken by force of arms into the Serapeion, that most glorious of earthly temples,—has shattered the statues—has plundered the altars, and destroyed that vast treasury of books, which was of such inestimable value precisely in this age of error and ignorance. I could weep for them as for a friend bereft me by death, were not my wrath too great for tears.

KYTRON.

Truly, this surpasses belief!

JULIAN.

And not to be within reach of these miserable beings to punish them! To be doomed to look idly on while such atrocities spread wider and wider around!—Thirty days, you say! Why are we loitering? Why are we pitching our tents? Why should we sleep? Do my generals not know what is at stake? We must hold a council of war. When I remember what the Macedonian Alexander achieved in thirty days——

JOVIAN, *accompanied by a man in Persian garb, unarmed, enters from the camp.*

JOVIAN.

Forgive me, sire, for appearing before you: but this stranger——

JULIAN.

A Persian warrior!

THE PERSIAN.

[*Prostrating himself to the earth.*] No warrior, O mighty Emperor!

JOVIAN.

He came riding over the plains unarmed, and surrendered at the outposts——

JULIAN.

Then your countrymen are at hand?

THE PERSIAN.

No, no!

JULIAN.

Whence come you then?

THE PERSIAN.

[*Throws open his garments.*] Look at these arms, O ruler of the world,—bleeding from rusty fetters. Feel this flayed back,—sore upon sore. I come from the torture chamber, sire!

JULIAN.

Ah—a fugitive from King Sapor?

THE PERSIAN.

Yes, mighty Emperor, to whom all things are known! I stood high in King Sapor's favour until, impelled by the terror of your approach, I dared to prophesy that this war would end in his destruction. Would you know, sire, how he has rewarded me? My wife he gave as a prey to his archers from the mountains; my children he sold as slaves; all my possessions he divided among his servants; myself he tortured for nine days. Then he bade me ride forth and die like a beast in the desert.

JULIAN.

And what would you with me?

THE PERSIAN.

What would I after such treatment? I would help you to destroy my persecutor.

JULIAN.

Ah, poor tortured wretch,—how can you help?

THE PERSIAN.

I can lend wings to your soldiers' feet.

JULIAN.

What mean you by that? Rise and explain yourself.

THE PERSIAN.

[*Rising.*] No one in Ctesiphon expected you to choose this route——

JULIAN.

I know that.

THE PERSIAN.

Now 'tis no longer a secret.

JULIAN.

You lie, fellow! You Persians know nought of my designs.

THE PERSIAN.

You, sire, whose wisdom is born of the sun and of fire, know well that my countrymen are now acquainted with your designs. You have crossed the rivers by means of your ships; these ships, more than a thousand in number, and laden with all the supplies of the army, are to be towed up the Tigris, and the troops are to advance abreast of the ships.

JULIAN.

Incredible——!

THE PERSIAN.

When the ships have approached as near Ctesiphon as possible—that is to say, within two days' march—you will make straight for the city, beleaguer it, and compel King Sapor to surrender.

JULIAN.

[*Looking round.*] Who has betrayed us?

THE PERSIAN.

This plan is now no longer practicable. My countrymen have hastily constructed stone dams in the bed of the river, on which your ships will run aground.

JULIAN.

Man, do you know what it will cost you if you deceive me?

THE PERSIAN.

My body is in your power, mighty Emperor! If I speak not the truth, you are free to burn me alive.

JULIAN.

[*To* NEVITA.] The river dammed! It will take weeks to make it navigable again.

NEVITA.

If it can be done at all, sire! We have not the implements——

JULIAN.

And that this should come upon us now—just when so much depends on a speedy victory.[1]

THE PERSIAN.

Oh ruler of the world, I have said that I can lend your army wings.

JULIAN.

Speak! Do you know of a shorter way?

THE PERSIAN.

If you will promise me that after your victory you will restore the possessions of which I have been robbed, and give me a new wife of noble birth, I will——

JULIAN.

I promise everything; only speak,—speak!

THE PERSIAN.

Strike straight across the plains, and in four days you will be under the walls of Ctesiphon.

JULIAN.

Do you forget the mountain chain on the other side of the plains?

THE PERSIAN.

Sire, have you never heard of that strange defile among the mountains?

[1] In the collected edition (1899) the word "sejre" (to conquer) of earlier editions is replaced by "rejse" (journey). This is almost certainly a misprint.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes, a chasm; "Ahriman's Street" it is called. Is it true that it exists?

THE PERSIAN.

I rode through "Ahriman's Street" two days ago.

JULIAN.

Nevita!

NEVITA.

In truth, sire, if it be so——

JULIAN.

Miraculous help in the hour of need——!

THE PERSIAN.

But if you would pass that way, O mighty one, there is not a moment to be lost. The Persian army which had been assembled in the northern provinces, is now recalled to block the mountain passes.

JULIAN.

Know you that for certain?

THE PERSIAN.

Delay, and you will discover it for yourself.

JULIAN.

How many days will it take your countrymen to get there?

THE PERSIAN.

Four days, sire.

JULIAN.

Nevita, in three days we must be beyond the defiles!

NEVITA.

[*To the* PERSIAN.] Is it possible to reach the defiles in three days?

THE PERSIAN.

Yes, great warrior, it is possible, if you make use of this night as well.

JULIAN.

Let the camp be broken up! No time now for sleep, for rest! In four days—or five at the utmost—I must stand before Ctesiphon.—What are you thinking about! Ah, I know.

NEVITA.

The fleet, sire!

JULIAN.

Yes, yes, yes, the fleet!

NEVITA.

Should the Persian army reach the defiles a day later than we, they will—if they cannot injure you in any other way—turn westward against your ships——

JULIAN.

And seize a vast amount of booty, wherewith to continue the war——

NEVITA.

If we could leave twenty thousand men with the ships, they would be safe——

JULIAN.

What are you thinking of! Twenty thousand? Well nigh a third of our fighting strength. Where would be the force with which I must strike the great blow? Divided, dispersed, frittered away. Not one man will I detach for such a purpose.

No, no, Nevita; but there may be a middle course——

NEVITA.

[*Recoiling.*] My great Emperor——!

JULIAN.

The fleet must neither fall into the hands of the Persians, nor yet cost us men. There is a middle course, I tell you! Why do you falter? Why not speak it out?

NEVITA.

[*To the* PERSIAN.] Do you know whether the citizens of Ctesiphon have stores of corn and oil?

THE PERSIAN.

Ctesiphon overflows with supplies of all sorts.

JULIAN.

And when we have once taken the city, the whole rich country lies open to us.

THE PERSIAN.

The citizens will open their gates to you, sire. I am not the only one who hates King Sapor. They will rise against him and straightway submit to you, if you come upon them, unprepared and panic-stricken, with your whole united force.

JULIAN.

Yes; yes.

THE PERSIAN.

Burn the ships, sire!

NEVITA.

Ah!

JULIAN.

His hate has eyes where your fidelity is blind, Nevita!

NEVITA.

My fidelity saw, sire; but it shrank from what it saw.

JULIAN.

Are not these ships like fetters on our feet? We have provisions for four full days in the camp. It is well that the soldiers should not be too heavily laden. Of what use, then, are the ships? We have no more rivers to pass——

NEVITA.

Sire, if it be indeed your will——

JULIAN.

My will,—my will? Oh, on an evening like this,—so angry and tempestuous,—why cannot a flash of lightning descend and——

MAXIMUS.

[*Entering hastily from the left.*] Oh chosen son of Helios—hear me, hear me!

JULIAN.

Not now, my Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

Nothing can be more pressing than this. You m u s t hear me!

JULIAN.

Then in the name of fortune and wisdom, speak, my brother!

MAXIMUS.

[*Draws him apart, and says in a low voice.*] You know how I have striven to search and spell out, both in books and through auguries, the issue of this campaign?

JULIAN.

I know that you have been unable to foretell anything.

MAXIMUS.

The omens spoke and the writings confirmed them. But the answer which always came was so strange that I could not but think myself mistaken.

JULIAN.

But now——?

MAXIMUS.

When we departed from Antioch, I wrote to Rome to consult the Sibylline Books——

JULIAN.

Yes, yes——!

MAXIMUS.

This very moment the answer has arrived; a courier from the governor of Antioch brought it.

JULIAN.

Ah, Maximus,—and its purport——?

MAXIMUS.

The same as that of the omens and the books; and now I dare interpret it. Rejoice, my brother,—in this war you are invulnerable.

JULIAN.

The oracle,—the oracle?

MAXIMUS.

The Sibylline Books say: "Julian must beware of the Phrygian regions."

JULIAN.

[*Recoiling.*] The Phrygian——? Ah, Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

Why so pale, my brother?

JULIAN.

Tell me, dear teacher—how do you interpret this answer?

MAXIMUS.

Is more than one interpretation possible? The Phrygian regions? What have you to do in Phrygia? In Phrygia—a remote province lying far behind you, where you need never set your foot. N o danger threatens you, fortunate man—t h a t is the interpretation.

JULIAN.

This oracle has a twofold meaning. No danger threatens me in this war,—but from that distant region——

Nevita, Nevita!

NEVITA.

Sire——!

JULIAN.

In Phrygia? Alexander writes of secret things preparing in Phrygia. It has been foretold that the Galilean is to come again——

Burn the ships, Nevita!

NEVITA.

Sire, is this your firm and irrevocable will——?

JULIAN.

Burn them! No delay! Lurking dangers threaten us in the rear. [*To one of the captains.*

Give close heed to this stranger. He is to be our guide.

Refresh him with food and drink, and let him have thorough rest.

JOVIAN.

My Emperor, I implore you—build not too securely on the reports of a deserter like this.

JULIAN.

Aha—you seem perturbed, my Galilean councillor! All this is not quite to your mind. Perhaps you know more than you care to tell.

Go, Nevita,—and burn the ships!

[NEVITA *bows and goes out to the left. The captain leads the Persian away among the tents.*

JULIAN.

Traitors in my own camp! Wait, wait,—I shall get to the bottom of these machinations.

The camp shall break up! Go, Jovian, see that the vanguard is afoot within an hour. The Persian knows the way. Go!

JOVIAN.

As you command, my august Emperor!

[*He goes out to the right.*

MAXIMUS.

You would burn the fleet? Then surely you have great things in your mind.

JULIAN.

Tell me, would the Macedonian Alexander have ventured this?

MAXIMUS.

Did Alexander know where the danger threatened?

JULIAN.

True, true! *I* know it. All the powers of victory are in league with me. Omens and signs yield up their mystic secrets to advance my empire.

Is it not said of the Galilean, that spirits came and ministered unto him?—To whom do the spirits now minister?

What would the Galilean say, were he present unseen among us?

MAXIMUS.

He would say: the third empire is at hand.

JULIAN.

The third empire is here, Maximus! I feel that the Messiah of the earth lives in me. The spirit has become flesh and the flesh spirit. All creation lies within my will and my power.

See, see,—there are the first sparks drifting aloft. The flames are licking up the cordage and the clustered masts. [*He shouts in the direction of the fire.*

Spread; spread!

MAXIMUS.

The wind anticipates your will. 'Tis rising to serve you.

JULIAN.

[*Commanding with clenched hand.*] Swell into a storm! More westerly! I command it!

FROMENTINUS.

[*Enters from the right.*] Most gracious Emperor,—suffer me to warn you. A dangerous disturbance has broken out in the camp.

JULIAN.

I will have no more disturbances. The army shall advance.

FROMENTINUS.

Yes, my Emperor,—but the refractory Galileans——

JULIAN.

The Galileans? What of them?

FROMENTINUS.

Before the tables where the paymasters were distributing the soldiers' pay, your august image had been set up——

JULIAN.

It is always to be so for the future.

FROMENTINUS.

Every man was ordered, as he came forward, to cast a grain of incense into the braziers——

JULIAN.

Yes—well, well?

FROMENTINUS.

Many of the Galilean soldiers did so unthinkingly, but others refused——

JULIAN.

What! they refused?

FROMENTINUS.

At first, sire; but when the paymasters told them that 'twas an old custom revived, in no wise pertaining to things divine——

JULIAN.

Aha! what then?

FROMENTINUS.

——they yielded and did as they were bidden.

JULIAN.

There you see; they yielded!

FROMENTINUS.

But afterward, sire, our own men laughed and mocked at them, and said, unthinkingly, that now they had best efface the sign of the cross and the fish which they are wont to imprint upon their arms; for now they had worshipped the divine Emperor.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes! And the Galileans?

FROMENTINUS.

They broke out into loud lamentations——; listen, listen, sire! It is impossible to bring them to reason.

[*Wild cries are heard without, among the tents.*

JULIAN.

The madmen! Rebellious to the last. They know not that their master's power is broken.

[*Christian soldiers come rushing in. Some beat their breasts; others tear their garments, with loud cries and weeping.*

A SOLDIER.

Christ died for me, and I forsook him!

ANOTHER SOLDIER.

Smite me, oh wrathful Lord in heaven; for I have worshipped false gods!

THE SOLDIER AGATHON.

The devil on the throne has slain my soul! Woe, woe, woe!

OTHER SOLDIERS.

[*Tearing off the leaden seals which they wear round their necks.*] We will not serve idols!

OTHERS AGAIN.

The Apostate is not our ruler! We will go home! home!

JULIAN.

Fromentinus, seize these madmen! Hew them down!

[FROMENTINUS *and many of the bystanders are on the point of falling upon the Christian soldiers. At that moment a vivid glare spreads over the sky, and flames burst from the ships.*

OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS.

[*Terror-stricken.*] The fleet is burning!

JULIAN.

Yes, the fleet is burning! And more than the fleet is burning. In that blazing, swirling pyre the crucified Galilean is burning to ashes; and the earthly Emperor is burning with the Galilean. But from the ashes shall arise—like that marvellous bird—the God of earth and the Emperor of the spirit in one, in one, in one!

SEVERAL VOICES.

Madness has seized him!

NEVITA.

[*Entering from the left.*] It is done.

JOVIAN.

[*Approaching hastily from the camp.*] Quench the fire! Out, out with it!

JULIAN.

Let it burn! Let it burn!

AMMIAN.

[*From the camp.*] Sire, you are betrayed. That Persian fugitive was a traitor——

JULIAN.

Man, you lie! Where is he?

AMMIAN.

Fled!

JOVIAN.

Vanished like a shadow——

NEVITA.

Fled!

JOVIAN.

His guards protest that he disappeared almost under their very eyes.

AMMIAN.

His horse, too, is gone from its pen; the Persian must have fled over the plains.

JULIAN.

Quench the fire, Nevita!

NEVITA.

Impossible, my Emperor!

JULIAN.

Put it out, I say. It s h a l l be possible!

NEVITA.

Nothing could be more impossible. All the cables are cut; the rest of the ships are all drifting down upon the burning wrecks.

PRINCE HORMISDAS.

[*Coming from among the tents.*] Curses upon my countrymen! Oh, sire, how could you give ear to that deceiver?

CRIES FROM THE CAMP.

The fleet on fire! Cut off from home! Death before us!

THE SOLDIER AGATHON.

False god, false god,—bid the storm to cease! bid the flames die down!

JOVIAN.

The storm increases. The fire is like a rolling sea——

MAXIMUS.

[*Whispers.*] Beware of the Phrygian regions.

JULIAN.

[*Shouts to the army.*] Let the fleet burn! Within seven days you shall burn Ctesiphon.

ACT FIFTH

SCENE FIRST

A barren, stony desert, without trees or grass. To the right, the Emperor's tent. Afternoon.

Exhausted soldiers lie in knots on the plain. Detachments now and again pass by from left to right. Outside the tent are the philosophers PRISCUS *and* KYTRON, *with several others of the Emperor's suite, waiting in restless anxiety. The captain of the bodyguard,* ANATOLUS, *stands with soldiers before the opening of the tent.*

KYTRON.

Is it not incredible that this council of war should last so long?

PRISCUS.

Ay, truly; one would think there were only two courses to choose between: to advance or to retire.

KYTRON.

'Tis utterly incomprehensible——
Tell me, good Anatolus, why, in the name of the gods, do we not advance?

PRISCUS.

Yes, why alarm us by halting here in the middle of the desert?

ANATOLUS.

See you the quivering air on the horizon, to the north, east, and south?

KYTRON.

Of course, of course; that is the heat——

ANATOLUS.

It is the desert burning.

PRISCUS.

What say you? The desert burning?

KYTRON.

Do not jest so unpleasantly, good Anatolus! Tell us, —what is it?

ANATOLUS.

The desert burning, I tell you. Out yonder, where the sand ceases, the Persians have set the grass on fire. We can make no progress till the ground cools.

KYTRON.

Oh is not this appalling! What barbarians! To have recourse to such means——!

PRISCUS.

Then there is no choice left us. Without provisions, without water——; why do we not retreat?

ANATOLUS.

Over the Tigris and Euphrates?

KYTRON.

And the fleet burnt! What way is this to conduct the war? Oh, why does not the Emperor think more of his friends! How shall I get home again?

ANATOLUS.

Like the rest of us, friend!

KYTRON.

Like the rest? Like the rest! That is a fine way to talk. With you it is quite another matter. You are soldiers. 'Tis your calling to endure certain hardships to which I am not at all accustomed. I did not join the Emperor's suite to go through all this. Here am I tortured with gnats and poisonous flies;—look at my hands!

PRISCUS.

Most certainly we did not come for this. We consented to accompany the army in order to compose panegyrics on the victories the Emperor intended to win. What has come of these victories? What has been achieved during the six toilsome weeks since the fleet was burnt? We have destroyed a few deserted towns of the sorriest kind. A few prisoners have been exhibited in the camp, whom the advance-guard are said to have taken—truly I know not in what battles! The prisoners, methought, looked more like poor kidnapped shepherds and peasants——

KYTRON.

And to think of burning the fleet! Said I not from the first that it would be a source of disaster?

ANATOLUS.

I did not hear you say so.

KYTRON.

What? Did I not say so? Oh Priscus, did you not hear me say it?

PRISCUS.

Truly, I do not know, friend; but I know that I myself in vain denounced that luckless measure. Indeed I may say that I opposed the whole campaign at this time of year. What rash haste! Where were the Emperor's eyes? Is this the same hero who fought with such marvellous success upon the Rhine? One would think he had been struck with blindness or some spiritual disease.

ANATOLUS.

Hush, hush;—what talk is this?

KYTRON.

'Twas indeed no fitting way for our Priscus to express himself. Yet I, too, cannot deny that I observe a deplorable lack of wisdom in many of the crowned philosopher's recent proceedings. How precipitate to set up his busts in the camp, and claim worship as if he were a god! How imprudent so openly to scoff at that strange teacher from Nazareth, who undeniably possesses a peculiar power, which might have stood us in good stead in these perilous conjunctures.

Ah! here comes Nevita himself. Now we shall hear——

[NEVITA *comes out of the tent. In the opening he turns and makes a sign to some one within. The physician* ORIBASES *immediately comes out.*

NEVITA.

[*Drawing him aside.*] Tell me openly, Oribases,—is there anything amiss with the Emperor's mind?

ORIBASES.

What should make you think that, sir?

NEVITA.

How else can I interpret his conduct?

ORIBASES.

Oh my beloved Emperor——!

NEVITA.

Oribases, you must hide nothing from me.

KYTRON.

[*Drawing near.*] Oh valiant general, if it be not indiscreet——

NEVITA.

Presently, presently!

ORIBASES.

[*To* NEVITA.] Do not fear, sir! No misfortune shall happen. Eutherius and I have promised each other to keep an eye upon him.

NEVITA.

Ah, you do not mean to say that——?

ORIBASES.

Last night he had well nigh shortened his life. Fortunately Eutherius was at hand——; oh speak of it to no one!

NEVITA.

Do not lose sight of him.

PRISCUS.

[*Drawing near.*] It would greatly relieve our minds to hear what the council of war——?

NEVITA.

Pardon me; I have weighty matters to attend to.
[*He goes out behind the tent.*

At the same moment JOVIAN *enters from the opening.*

JOVIAN.

[*Speaking into the tent.*] It shall be done, my gracious Emperor!

KYTRON.

Ah, most excellent Jovian! Well? Is the retreat decided on?

JOVIAN.

I would not counsel any one to call it a retreat.
[*He goes out behind the tent.*

KYTRON.

Oh these soldiers! A philosopher's peace of mind is nothing to them. Ah!

[*The* EMPEROR JULIAN *comes out of the tent; he is pale and haggard. With him come the Chamberlain* EUTHERIUS *and several officers; the latter go off over the plain to the right.*

JULIAN.

[*To the philosophers.*] Rejoice, my friends! All will soon be well now.

KYTRON.

Ah, gracious Emperor, have you discovered an expedient?

JULIAN.

There are expedients enough, Kytron; the only difficulty is to choose the best. We will slightly alter the line of advance——

PRISCUS.

Oh, praise be to your wisdom!

JULIAN.

This eastward march—it leads to nothing.

KYTRON.

No, no, that is certain!

JULIAN.

Now we will turn northward, Kytron.

KYTRON.

What, sire,—northward?

PRISCUS.

Not westward?

JULIAN.

Not westward. Not by any means westward. That might be difficult on account of the rivers. And Ctesiphon we must leave till another time. Without ships we cannot think of taking the city. It was the Galileans who brought about the burning of the fleet; I have noted one thing and another.

Who dares call this northward movement a retreat? What know you of my plans? The Persian army is somewhere in the north; of that we are now pretty well assured. When I have crushed Sapor—one battle will finish the matter—we shall find abundant supplies in the Persian camp.

When I lead the Persian king as my captive through Antioch and the other cities, I would fain see whether the citizens will not fall at my feet.

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.

[*Pass singing over the plain.*

Doomed is the world's proud cedar-tree,
The axe shall its roots dissever;
The palm He planted on Calvary,
Blood-watered, shall bloom for ever.

JULIAN.

[*Following them with his eyes.*] The Galileans are always singing. Songs about death and wounds and

pain. Those women whom I brought with me to tend the sick—they have done us more harm than good. They have taught the soldiers strange songs, such as I have never heard before.

But hereafter I will punish no one for such things. It does but lead them deeper into error. Know you, Priscus, what happened of late, in the case of those mutineers who refused to show due reverence to the imperial busts?

PRISCUS.

Of l a t e, sire?

JULIAN.

When, wishing to beget a wholesome dread in their companions in error, I ordered some of these men to be executed, the oldest of them stepped forward with loud cries of joy, and begged to be the first to die.—Look you, Priscus—when I heard that yesterday——

PRISCUS.

Yesterday? Oh, sire, you are mistaken. That happened forty days ago.

JULIAN.

So long? Yes, yes, yes! The Hebrews had to wander forty years in the wilderness. All the older generation had to die out. A new generation had to spring up; but t h e y—mark that!—t h e y entered into the promised land.

EUTHERIUS.

'Tis late in the day, sire; will you not eat?

JULIAN.

Not yet, my Eutherius. 'Tis good for all men to mortify the flesh.

Yes, I tell you, we must make haste to become a new generation. I can do nothing with you as you are. If you would escape from the desert, you must lead a pure life. Look at the Galileans. We might learn more than one lesson from these men. There are none poverty-stricken and helpless among them; they live together as brethren and sisters,—and most of all now, when their obstinacy has forced me to chastise them. These Galileans, you must know, have something in their hearts which I could greatly desire that you should emulate. You call yourselves followers of Socrates, of Plato, of Diogenes. Is there one of you who would face death with ecstasy for Plato's sake? Would our Priscus sacrifice his left hand for Socrates? Would Kytron, for Diogenes' sake, let his ear be cut off? No, truly! I know you, whited sepulchres! Begone out of my sight; —I can do nothing with you!

[*The philosophers slink away; the others also disperse, whispering anxiously. Only* ORIBASES *and* EUTHERIUS *remain behind with the Emperor.* ANATOLUS, *the officer of the guard, still stands with his soldiers outside the tent.*

JULIAN.

How strange! Is it not inconceivable, unfathomable? Oribases,—can you rede me this riddle?

ORIBASES.

What riddle do you mean, my Emperor?

JULIAN.

With twelve poor ignorant fishermen, he founded all this.

ORIBASES.

Oh sire, these thoughts exhaust you.

JULIAN.

And who has held it together until this day? Women and ignorant people, for the most part——

ORIBASES.

Yes, yes, sire; but now the campaign will soon take a happy turn——

JULIAN.

Very true, Oribases; as soon as fortune has taken a turn, all will be well. The dominion of the carpenter's son is drawing to its close; we know that. His reign is to last as many years as the year has days; and now we have——

EUTHERIUS.

My beloved master, would not a bath refresh you?

JULIAN.

Do you think so?—You may go, Eutherius! Go, go! I have something to say to Oribases.

[EUTHERIUS *goes off behind the tent. The Emperor draws* ORIBASES *over to the other side.*

JULIAN.

Has Eutherius told you aught this morning?

ORIBASES.

No, sire!

JULIAN

Has he told you nothing about last night——?

ORIBASES.

No, my Emperor—nothing at all. Eutherius is very silent.

JULIAN.

If he should tell you anything, do not believe it. The thing did not happen at all as he pretends. 'Tis he who is seeking my life.

ORIBASES.

He,—your old and faithful servant!

JULIAN.

I shall keep an eye on him.

ORIBASES.

I too.

JULIAN.

We will both keep an eye on him.

ORIBASES.

Sire, I fear you had but little sleep last night.

JULIAN.

Very little.

[ORIBASES *is on the point of saying something, but changes his mind.*

JULIAN.

Know you what kept me from sleeping?

ORIBASES.

No, my Emperor.

JULIAN.

The victor of the Milvian Bridge was with me.

ORIBASES.

The great Constantine?

JULIAN.

Yes. For some nights past his shade has given me no rest. He comes a little after midnight, and does not depart until the dawn is at hand.

ORIBASES.

The moon is full, sire; that has always had a strange effect on your mind.

JULIAN.

According to the ancients, such apparitions are wont— What can have become of Maximus? But their opinions are by no means to be relied on. We see how greatly they erred in many things. Even what they tell us of the gods we cannot believe without reserve. Nor what they report as to the shades, and the powers, as a whole, which rule the destinies of men. What know we of these powers? We know nothing, Oribases, except their capriciousness and inconstancy, of which characteristics we have evidence enough.

I wish Maximus would come—— [*To himself.*
Here? 'Tis not here that the menacing storm is drawing up. 'Twas said to be in the Phrygian regions——

ORIBASES.

What regions, sire,—and what storm?

JULIAN.

Oh nothing—nothing.

NEVITA.

[*Enters from the plain on the right.*] My Emperor, the army is now on the march.

JULIAN.

Northwards?

NEVITA.

[*Starts.*] Of course, sire!

JULIAN.

We ought to have waited till Maximus——

NEVITA.

What mean you, my Emperor? There is nothing to wait for. We are without supplies; scattered bands of the enemy's horsemen are already appearing both in the east and in the south——

JULIAN.

Yes, yes, we m u s t advance,—northwards. Maximus must soon be here. I have sent to the rear for the

Etruscan soothsayers; they shall try once more—— I have also discovered some Magians, who say they are well versed in the Chaldean mysteries. Our own priests are taking the omens in nine different places——

NEVITA.

Sire, whatever the omens may say, I tell you we must go hence. The soldiers are no longer to be depended on; they see clearly that our only hope lies in reaching the Armenian mountains.

JULIAN.

We will do so, Nevita,—whatever the omens say. Nevertheless it gives one a great feeling of security to know that one is acting, as it were, in concert with those unfathomable powers who, if they will, can so potently influence our destinies.

NEVITA.

[*Goes from him, and says shortly and decisively.*] Anatolus, strike the Emperor's tent!

[*He whispers some words to the Captain of the Guard, and goes out to the right.*

JULIAN.

All auguries for these forty days have been inauspicious; and that proves that we may place trust in them; for in all that time our affairs have made but scant headway. But now, you see, my Oribases,—now that I have a fresh enterprise in view——

Ah! Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

[*Entering from the plain.*] The army is already on the march, sire; get to horse!

JULIAN.

The auguries—the auguries?

MAXIMUS.

Oh—the auguries! Ask not about the auguries.

JULIAN.

Speak! I demand to know what they say.

MAXIMUS.

All auguries are silent.

JULIAN.

Silent?

MAXIMUS.

I went to the priests; the entrails of the sacrifices gave no sign. I went to the Etruscan jugglers; the flight and cries of the birds said nothing. I went also to the Magians; their writings had no answer to give. And I myself——

JULIAN.

You yourself, my Maximus?

MAXIMUS.

Now I can tell you. Last night I studied the aspect of the stars. They told me nothing, Julian.

JULIAN.

Nothing.—Silence—silence, as though in an eclipse. Alone! No longer any bridge between me and the spirits.

Where are you now, oh white-sailed fleet, that sped to and fro in the sunlight and carried tidings between earth and heaven?

The fleet is burnt. That fleet too is burnt. Oh, all my shining ships.

Tell me, Maximus—what do you believe as to this?

MAXIMUS.

I believe in you.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes—believe!

MAXIMUS.

The world-will has resigned its power into your hands; therefore it is silent.

JULIAN.

So will we read it. And we must act accordingly, —although we might have preferred that—— This silence! To stand so utterly alone.

But there are others who may also be said to stand almost alone. The Galileans. They have but one god; and one god is next thing to no god.

How is it, then, that we daily see these men——?

ANATOLUS.

[*Who has meanwhile had the tent struck.*] My Emperor, now must you get to horse; I dare not let you remain here longer.

JULIAN.

Yes, now I will mount. Where is my good Babylonius? See now; sword in hand——
Come, my dear friends! [*All go out to the right.*

SCENE SECOND

A marshy, wooded country. A dark, still lake among the trees. Watch-fires in the distance. Moonlight, with driving clouds.
Several soldiers on guard in the foreground.

MAKRINA AND THE WOMEN.

[*Singing without, on the left.*
Woe to us! Woe!
Upon us all
God's wrath will fall!
Death we shall know!

ONE OF THE SOLDIERS.

[*Listening.*] Hark! Do you hear? The Galilean women are singing over yonder.

ANOTHER SOLDIER.

They sing like owls and night ravens.

A THIRD SOLDIER.

Yet would I willingly be with them. 'Tis safer with the Galileans than with us. The God of the Galileans is stronger than our gods.

THE FIRST SOLDIER.

The thing is that the Emperor has angered the gods. How could he think of setting himself up in their place?

THE THIRD SOLDIER.

What is worse is that he has angered the Galileans' God. Have you not heard, they say positively that, a few nights since, he and his magician ripped open a pregnant woman, to read omens in her entrails?

THE FIRST SOLDIER.

Ay, but I do not believe it. At any rate, I am sure 'twas not a Greek woman; it must have been a barbarian.

THE THIRD SOLDIER.

They say the Galileans' God cares for the barbarians too; and if so, 'twill be the worse for us.

THE SECOND SOLDIER.

Oh, pooh—the Emperor is a great soldier.

THE FIRST SOLDIER.

They say King Sapor is a great soldier too.

THE SECOND SOLDIER.

Think you we have the whole Persian army before us?

THE FIRST SOLDIER.

Some say 'tis only the advance-guard; no one knows for certain.

THE THIRD SOLDIER.

I would I were among the Galileans.

THE FIRST SOLDIER.

Are you going over to them, too?

THE THIRD SOLDIER.

So many are going over. In the last few days——

THE FIRST SOLDIER.

[*Calling out into the darkness.*] Halt—halt! Who goes there?

A VOICE.

Friends from the outposts!

[*Several soldiers come from among the trees, with* AGATHON *the Cappadocian in their midst.*

THE SECOND SOLDIER.

Ho-ho; a deserter.

ONE OF THE NEW-COMERS.

No; he has gone out of his mind.

AGATHON.

I have n o t gone out of my mind. Oh, for God's great mercy's sake,—let me go!

THE SOLDIER FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

He says he wants to slay a beast with seven heads.

AGATHON.

Yes, yes, yes, I will, I will. Oh, let me go! See you this spear? Know you what spear it is? With this spear will I slay the beast with seven heads, and then I shall get back my soul again. Christ himself has promised me that. He was with me to-night.

THE FIRST SOLDIER.

Hunger and weariness have turned his brain.

ONE OF THE NEW-COMERS.

To the camp with him; there he can sleep his weariness away.

AGATHON.

Let me go! Oh, if you but knew what spear this is!

[*The soldiers lead him off by the front, to the right.*

THE THIRD SOLDIER.

What could he mean by that beast?

THE FIRST SOLDIER.

That is one of the Galilean secrets. They have many such secrets among them.

[EUTHERIUS *and* ORIBASES *enter hastily from the right, looking anxiously about.*

EUTHERIUS.

Do you not see him?

ORIBASES.

No.—Ah, soldiers!—Tell me, good friends, has any one passed by here?

THE FIRST SOLDIER.

Yes, a detachment of spearmen.

ORIBASES.

Good, good! But nobody else? No great person? None of the generals?

THE SOLDIERS.

No, none.

ORIBASES.

Not here then! Oh, Eutherius, how could you——?

EUTHERIUS.

Could I help——? Could I help it——? I have not closed my old eyes for three nights——

ORIBASES.

[*To the soldiers.*] You must help us to search. I demand it in the name of the general-in-chief. Spread yourselves among the trees; and should you find any great person, report it at the watch-fire yonder.

THE SOLDIERS.

We will not fail, sir!

[*They all go out by different ways, to the left. Soon after, the* EMPEROR *emerges from behind a tree on the right. He listens, looks round, and beckons to some one behind him.*

JULIAN.

Hist! Come forward, Maximus! They did not see us.

MAXIMUS.

[*From the same side.*] Oribases was one of them.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes; both he and Eutherius keep watch on me. They imagine that—— Has neither of them told you aught?

MAXIMUS.

No, my Julian! But why have you awakened me? What would you here in the darkness?

JULIAN.

I would be alone with you for the last time, my beloved teacher!

MAXIMUS.

Not for the last time, Julian!

JULIAN.

See that dark water. Think you—if I utterly vanished from the earth, and my body was never found, and none knew what had become of me,—think you the report would spread abroad that Hermes had come for me, and carried me away, and that I had been exalted to the fellowship of the gods?

MAXIMUS.

The time is at hand when men will not need to die, in order to live as gods on the earth.

JULIAN.

I am pining with home-sickness, Maximus,—with home-sick longing for the light and the sun and all the stars.

MAXIMUS.

Oh, I beseech you—think not of sorrowful things. The Persian army is before you. To-morrow will come the battle. You will conquer——

JULIAN.

I—conquer? You do not know who was with me an hour ago.

MAXIMUS.

Who was with you?

JULIAN.

I had fallen asleep on my couch in the tent. Suddenly I was awakened by a strong red glare, that seemed to burn through my closed eye-lids. I looked up and beheld a figure standing in the tent. Over its head was a long drapery, falling on both sides, so as to leave the face free.

MAXIMUS.

Knew you this figure?

JULIAN.

It was the same face which I saw in the light that night at Ephesus, many years ago,—that night when we held symposium with the two others.

MAXIMUS.

The spirit of the empire.

JULIAN.

Since then it has appeared to me once in Gaul,—on an occasion I would fain forget.

MAXIMUS.

Did it speak?

JULIAN.

No. It seemed as though it wished to speak; but it did not. It stood motionless, looking at me. Its face was pale and distorted. Suddenly, with both arms, it drew the drapery together over its head, hid its face, and went straight out through the tent-wall.

MAXIMUS.

The decisive hour is at hand.

JULIAN.

Ay, truly, 'tis at hand.

MAXIMUS.

Courage, Julian! He who wills, conquers.

JULIAN.

And what does the conqueror win? Is it worth while to conquer? What has the Macedonian Alexander, what has Julius Caesar won? Greeks and Romans talk of their renown with cold admiration,—while the other, the Galilean, the carpenter's son, sits throned as the king of love in the warm, believing hearts of men.

Where is he now?—Has he been at work elsewhere since that happened at Golgotha?

I dreamed of him lately. I dreamed that I had subdued the whole world. I ordained that the memory of the Galilean should be rooted out on earth; and it was rooted out.—Then the spirits came and ministered to me, and bound wings on my shoulders, and I soared aloft into infinite space, till my feet rested on another world.

It was another world than mine. Its curve was vaster, its light more golden, and many moons circled around it.

Then I looked down at my own earth—the Emperor's earth, which I had made Galileanless—and I thought that all that I had done was very good.

But behold, my Maximus,—there came a procession by me, on the strange earth where I stood. There were soldiers, and judges, and executioners at the head of it, and weeping women followed. And lo!—in the midst of the slow-moving array, was the Galilean, alive, and bearing a cross on his back. Then I called to him, and said, "Whither away, Galilean?" But he turned his face toward me, smiled, nodded slowly, and said: "To the place of the skull."

Where is he now? What if that at Golgotha, near Jerusalem, was but a wayside matter, a thing done, as it were, in passing, in a leisure hour? What if he goes on and on, and suffers, and dies, and conquers, again and again, from world to world?

Oh that I could lay waste the world! Maximus,—is there no poison, no consuming fire, that could lay creation desolate, as it was on that day when the spirit moved alone over the face of the waters?

MAXIMUS.

I hear a noise from the outposts. Come, Julian——

JULIAN.

To think that century shall follow century, and that in them all shall live men, knowing that 'twas I who was vanquished, and he who conquered!

I w i l l not be vanquished! I am young; I am invulnerable,—the third empire is at hand——

[*With a great cry.*

There he stands!

MAXIMUS.

Who? Where?

JULIAN.

Do you see him? There, among the tree-stems—in a crown and a purple robe——

MAXIMUS.

'Tis the moon glimmering on the water. Come — come, my Julian!

JULIAN.

[*Going threateningly towards the vision.*] Avaunt! Thou art dead! Thy empire is past. Off with the juggler's cloak, carpenter's son!

What dost thou there? At what art thou hammering? —Ah!

EUTHERIUS.

[*From the left.*] All gods be praised!—Oribases,—here, here!

JULIAN.

What has become of him?

ORIBASES.

[*From the left.*] Is he here?

EUTHERIUS.

Yes.—Oh my beloved Emperor!

JULIAN.

Who was it that said, "I am hammering the Emperor's coffin"?

ORIBASES.

What mean you, sire?

JULIAN.

Who spoke, I ask? Who was it that said, "I am hammering the Emperor's coffin"?

ORIBASES.

Come with me to your tent, I implore you!

[*Shouts and cries are heard far away.*

MAXIMUS.

War-cries! The Persians are upon us——

EUTHERIUS.

There is already fierce fighting at the outposts.

ORIBASES.

The enemy is in the camp! Ah, sire, you are unarmed——!

JULIAN.

I will sacrifice to the gods.

MAXIMUS.

To what gods, oh fool? Where are they—and what are they?

JULIAN.

I will sacrifice to this god and to that. I will sacrifice to many. One or another must surely hear me. I must call upon something without me and above me——

ORIBASES.

There is not a moment to be lost——!

JULIAN.

Ah—saw you the burning torch behind the cloud? It flashed forth and went out in the same instant. A message from the spirits! A shining ship between heaven and earth!—My shield! My sword!

[*He rushes out to the right.* ORIBASES *and* EUTHERIUS *follow him.*

MAXIMUS.

[*Calling after him.*] Emperor, Emperor—do not fight to-night! [*He goes off to the right.*

SCENE THIRD

An open plain, with a village far away. Daybreak and cloudy weather.

A noise of battle. Cries and the clashing of weapons out on the plain. In the foreground Roman spearmen, under AMMIAN'S *command, fighting with Persian archers. The latter are driven back by degrees towards the left.*

AMMIAN.

Right, right! Close with them! Thrust them down! Give them no time to shoot!

NEVITA.

[*With followers from the right.*] Well fought, Ammian!

AMMIAN.

Oh sir, why come not the cavalry to our help?

NEVITA.

They cannot. The Persians have elephants in their front rank. The very smell strikes terror to the horses. Thrust—thrust! Upwards, men,—under their breast-plates?

KYTRON.

[*In night-clothes, laden with books and rolls of paper, enters from the right.*] Oh that I should be in the midst of such horrors!

NEVITA.

Have you seen the Emperor, friend?

KYTRON.

Yes, but he needs me not. Oh, I humbly beg for a detachment of soldiers to protect me!

NEVITA.

[*To his followers.*] They are giving ground! The shield-bearers forward!

KYTRON.

You do not listen to me, sir! My safety is of the utmost importance; my book, "On Equanimity in Affliction," is not finished——

NEVITA.

[*As before.*] The Persians have been reinforced on the right. They are pressing forward again!

KYTRON.

Pressing forward again? Oh this bloodthirsty ferocity! An arrow! It almost struck me! How recklessly they shoot; no care for life or limb!

[*He takes to flight by the foreground on the left.*

NEVITA.

The battle hangs in the balance. Neither side gains ground.

[*To* FROMENTINUS, *who comes with a fresh troop from the right.*

Ho, captain,—have you seen the Emperor?

FROMENTINUS.

Yes, sir; he is fighting at the head of the white horsemen.

NEVITA.

Not wounded?

FROMENTINUS.

He seems invulnerable. Arrows and javelins swerve aside wherever he shows himself.

AMMIAN.

[*Calling out from the thick of the fight.*] Help, help; we can hold out no longer!

NEVITA.

Forward, my bold Fromentinus!

FROMENTINUS.

[*To the soldiers.*] Shoulder to shoulder, and at them, Greeks!

[*He hastens to the help of* AMMIAN; *the mellay rolls backwards a little.*

ANATOLUS, *the Captain of the Guard, enters with followers from the right.*

ANATOLUS.

Is not the Emperor here?

NEVITA.

The Emperor! Is it not your business to answer for him?

ANATOLUS.

His horse was shot under him,—a terrible tumult arose; it was impossible to get near him——

NEVITA.

Think you he has come to any harm?

ANATOLUS.

No, I think not. There was a cry that he was unhurt, but——

MANY OF NEVITA'S FOLLOWERS.

There he is! There he is!

The EMPEROR JULIAN, *without helmet or armour, with only a sword and shield, escorted by soldiers of the Imperial Guard, enters from the right.*

JULIAN.

'Tis well I have found you, Nevita!

NEVITA.

Ah, sire—without armour; how imprudent——

JULIAN.

In these regions no weapon can touch me. But go, Nevita; take the supreme command; my horse was shot under me, and——

NEVITA.

My Emperor, then after all you are hurt?

JULIAN.

No; only a blow on the head; a little dizzy. Go, go—— What is this? So many strange multitudes thronging in among us!

NEVITA.

[*In a low voice.*] Anatolus, you must answer for the Emperor.

ANATOLUS.

Never fear, sir!

[NEVITA *goes off with his followers to the right. The* EMPEROR JULIAN, ANATOLUS, *and some of the Imperial Guard remain behind. The fight on the plain rolls further and further back.*

JULIAN.

How many of our men think you have fallen, Anatolus?

ANATOLUS.

Certainly not a few, sire; but I am sure the Persians have lost more than we.

JULIAN.

Yes, yes; but many have fallen, both Greeks and Romans. Do you not think so?

ANATOLUS.

Surely you are unwell, my Emperor. Your face is so pale——

JULIAN.

Look at those lying there,—some on their backs, others on their faces, with outstretched arms. They must all be dead?

ANATOLUS.

Yes, sire, beyond a doubt.

JULIAN.

They are dead, yes! They know nought, then, either of the defeat at Jerusalem or the other defeats.—Think you many more Greeks will fall in the battle, Anatolus?

ANATOLUS.

Sire, let us hope the bloodiest work is over.

JULIAN.

Many, many more will fall, I tell you! But not enough. Of what use is it that m a n y should fall? None the less will posterity learn——

Tell me, Anatolus, how think you the Emperor Caligula pictured to himself that sword?

ANATOLUS.

What sword, sire?

JULIAN.

You know he wished for a sword wherewith he might at one blow——

ANATOLUS.

Hark to the shouts, sire! Now I am sure the Persians are retreating.

JULIAN.

[*Listening.*] What song is that in the air?

ANATOLUS.

Sire, let me summon Oribases; or still better,—come, —come; you are sick!

JULIAN.

There is singing in the air. Can you not hear it?

ANATOLUS.

If it be so, it must be the Galileans——

JULIAN.

Ay, be sure 'tis the Galileans. Ha-ha-ha, they fight in our ranks, and see not who stands on the other side. Oh fools, all of you! Where is Nevita? Why should he attack the Persians? Can he not see that 'tis not the Persians who are most dangerous?—You betray me, all of you.

ANATOLUS.

[*Softly to one of the soldiers.*] Hasten to the camp; bring hither the Emperor's physician?

[*The soldier goes out to the right.*

JULIAN.

What innumerable hosts! Think you they have caught sight of us, Anatolus?

ANATOLUS.

Who, sire? Where?

JULIAN.

Do you not see them—yonder—high up and far away! You lie! You see them well enough!

ANATOLUS.

By the immortal gods, they are only the morning clouds,—'tis the day dawning.

JULIAN.

'Tis the hosts of the Galilean, I tell you! Look—those in the red-edged garments are the martyrs who died in blood. Singing women surround them, and weave bow-

strings of the long hair torn from their heads. Children are with them, twining slings from their unravelled entrails. Burning torches——! Thousandfold—multitudinous! They are hastening hitherward! They are all looking at me; all rushing straight upon me!

ANATOLUS.

'Tis the Persians, sire! Our ranks are giving way——

JULIAN.

They s h a l l not give way!—You s h a l l not! Stand fast, Greeks! Stand, stand, Romans! To-day we will free the world.

[*The battle has in the meantime swept forward over the plain again.* JULIAN *hurls himself with drawn sword into the thickest of the fight. General confusion.*

ANATOLUS.

[*Calling out to the right.*] Help, help! The Emperor is in deadly peril!

JULIAN.

[*Among the combatants.*] I see him; I see him! A longer sword! Who has a longer sword to lend me?

SOLDIERS.

[*Streaming in from the right.*] With Christ for the Emperor!

AGATHON.

[*Among the new-comers.*] With Christ for Christ!

[*He throws his spear; it grazes the Emperor's arm, and plunges into his side.*

JULIAN.

Ah!

[*He grasps the spear-head to draw it out, but gashes his hand, utters a loud cry, and falls.*

AGATHON.

[*Calls out in the tumult.*] The Roman's spear from Golgotha!

[*He casts himself weaponless among the Persians, and is seen to be cut down.*

CONFUSED CRIES.

The Emperor! Is the Emperor wounded?

JULIAN.

[*Attempts to rise, but falls back again, and cries:*] Thou hast conquered, Galilean!

MANY VOICES.

The Emperor has fallen!

ANATOLUS.

The Emperor is wounded! Shield him—shield him, in the name of the gods!

[*He casts himself despairingly against the advancing Persians. The Emperor is carried away senseless. At that moment,* JOVIAN *comes forward upon the plain with fresh troops.*

JOVIAN.

On—on, believing brethren; give Caesar what is Caesar's!

RETREATING SOLDIERS.

[*Calling to him.*] He has fallen! The Emperor has fallen!

JOVIAN.

Fallen! Oh mighty God of vengeance! On, on; 'tis God's will that his people shall live! I see heaven open; I see the angels with flaming swords——

THE SOLDIERS.

[*Hurtling forward.*] Christ is among us!

AMMIAN'S TROOPS.

The Galileans' God is among us! Close round him! He is the strongest!

[*A wild tumult of battle.* JOVIAN *hews his way into the enemy's ranks. Sunrise. The Persians flee in all directions.*

SCENE FOURTH

The Emperor's tent, with a curtained entrance in the background. Daylight.

The Emperor JULIAN *lies unconscious on his couch. The wounds in his right side, arm, and hand are bound up. Close to him stand* ORIBASES *and* MAKRINA, *with* EUTHERIUS. *Further back* BASIL OF CAESAREA, *and* PRISCUS. *At the foot of the bed stands* MAXIMUS THE MYSTIC.

MAKRINA.

He bleeds again. I must bind the bandage tighter.

ORIBASES.

Thanks to you, tender woman; your heedful hands do us good service here.

EUTHERIUS.

Is it possible that he still lives?

ORIBASES.

Certainly he lives.

EUTHERIUS.

But he does not breathe.

ORIBASES.

Yes, he breathes.

AMMIAN *enters softly, with the Emperor's sword and shield, which he lays down, and remains standing beside the curtain.*

PRISCUS.

Ah, good captain, how go affairs without?

AMMIAN.

Better than here. Is he already——?

PRISCUS.

No, no, not yet. But it is certain that we have defeated the Persians?

AMMIAN.

Completely. It was Jovian who put them to flight. Three noblemen have even now arrived as envoys from King Sapor, to beg for a truce.

PRISCUS.

And think you Nevita will accede to it?

AMMIAN.

Nevita has yielded up the command to Jovian. All flock around him. All see in him our one hope of safety——

ORIBASES.

Speak low; he moves.

AMMIAN.

He moves. Mayhap he is awakening to consciousness! Oh, if he should live to see this!

EUTHERIUS.

What, Ammian?

AMMIAN.

Both soldiers and leaders are taking counsel as to the choice of the new Emperor.

PRISCUS.

What say you?

EUTHERIUS.

Oh, what shameful haste!

AMMIAN.

The perilous situation of the army partly excuses it; and yet——

JULIAN.

My wounds will soon be healed. Will they not. Oribases—do you not promise me——?

ORIBASES.

Above all things rest, sire!

JULIAN.

What a most untimely chance! Just at this moment, when so many weighty matters are crowding in upon me. I cannot leave these things in Nevita's hands. In such matters I can trust neither him nor others; I must do all myself.—'Tis true, I feel somewhat weary. How unfortunate!—Tell me, Ammian, what is the name of that ill-omened place?

AMMIAN.

What place, my gracious Emperor?

JULIAN.

The spot where the Persian javelin struck me?

AMMIAN.

'Tis called after the village of Phrygia——

MAXIMUS.

JULIAN.

? What say you the region is

AMMIAN.

No, my Emperor,—here are both your shield and your sword.

JULIAN.

I am very glad of that. My good shield. I should grieve to think of it in the hands of the barbarians. Give it me, on my arm——

MAKRINA.

Oh, sire, 'tis too heavy for you now!

JULIAN.

Ah, y o u ? You are right, pious Makrina; 'tis a little too heavy for me.—Lay it before me, that I may see it. What? Is that you, Ammian? Are you on guard here? Where is Anatolus?

AMMIAN.

Sire, he is now in bliss.

JULIAN.

Fallen? My trusty Anatolus fallen for my sake!—In bliss, you say? Ha——

One friend the less. Ah, my Maximus!—I will not receive the Persian king's envoys to-day. Their design is merely to waste my time. But I will grant no terms. I will follow up the victory to the utmost. The army shall turn against Ctesiphon again.

ORIBASES.

Impossible, sire; think of your wounds.

JULIAN.

My wounds will soon be healed. Will they not. Oribases—do you not promise me——?

ORIBASES.

Above all things rest, sire!

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AMMIAN.

What place, my gracious Emperor?

JULIAN.

The spot where the Persian javelin struck me?

AMMIAN.

'Tis called after the village of Phrygia——

MAXIMUS.

Ah!

JULIAN.

What is it called——? What say you the region is called?

AMMIAN.

'Tis called from the village over yonder, the Phrygian region.

JULIAN.

Ah, Maximus—Maximus!

MAXIMUS.

Betrayed!

[*He hides his face, and sinks down at the foot of the bed.*

ORIBASES.

My Emperor, what alarms you?

JULIAN.

Nothing—nothing——
Phrygia? Is it so? Nevita and the others will have to take the command after all. Go, tell them——

AMMIAN.

Sire, they have already, on your behalf——

JULIAN.

Have they? Yes, yes, that is well.
The world-will has laid an ambush for me, Maximus!

MAKRINA.

Your wound bleeds afresh, sire!

JULIAN.

Oh, Oribases, why did you seek to hide it from me?

ORIBASES.

What did I seek to hide, my Emperor?

JULIAN.

That I must die. Why not have told me before.

ORIBASES.

Oh, my Emperor!

BASIL.

Julian—Julian!

[*He casts himself down, weeping, beside the bed.*

JULIAN.

Basil,—friend, brother,—we two have lived beautiful days together——

You must not weep because I depart from you so young. 'Tis not always a sign of the Fates' displeasure when they call a man away in his prime. What, after all, is death? 'Tis nought but paying our debt to the ever-changing empire of the dust. No lamentations! Do we not all love wisdom? And does not wisdom teach us that the highest bliss lies in the life of the soul, not in that of the body? So far the Galileans are right, although——; but we will not speak of that. Had the powers of life and death suffered me to finish a certain treatise, I think I should have succeeded in——

ORIBASES.

Oh my Emperor, does it not weary you to talk so much?

JULIAN.

No, no, no. I feel very light and free.

BASIL.

Julian, my beloved brother,—is there nought you would recall?

JULIAN.

Truly I know not what it should be.

BASIL.

Nothing to repent of, Julian?

JULIAN.

Nothing. That power which circumstances placed in my hands, and which is an emanation of divinity, I am conscious of having used to the best of my skill. I have never wittingly wronged any one. For this campaign there were good and sufficient reasons; and if some should think that I have not fulfilled all expectations, they ought in justice to reflect that there is a mysterious power without us, which in a great measure governs the issue of human undertakings.

MAKRINA.

[*Softly to* ORIBASES.] Oh listen—listen how heavily he breathes.

ORIBASES.

His voice will soon fail him.

JULIAN.

As to the choice of my successor, I presume not to give any advice.—You, Eutherius, will divide my possessions

among those who have stood nearest to me. I do not leave much; for I have always held that a true philosopher——

What is t h i s ? Is the sun already setting?

ORIBASES.

Not so, my Emperor; 'tis still broad day.

JULIAN.

Strange! It seemed to me to turn quite dark——

Ah, wisdom—wisdom. Hold fast to wisdom, good Priscus! But be always armed against an unfathomable something without us, which——

Is Maximus gone?

MAXIMUS.

No, my brother!

JULIAN.

My throat is burning. Can you not cool it?

MAKRINA.

A draught of water, sire?

[*She holds a cup to his lips.*

ORIBASES.

[*Whispers to* MAKRINA.] His wound bleeds inwardly.

JULIAN.

Do not weep. Let no Greek weep for me; I am ascending to the stars——

Beautiful temples—— Pictures—— But so far away.

MAKRINA.

Of what is he talking?

ORIBASES.

I know not; I think his mind is wandering.

JULIAN.

[*With closed eyes.*] 'Twas given to Alexander to enter in triumph—into Babylon.—I too will—— Beautiful wreath-crown'd youths — dancing maidens, but so far away.

Beautiful earth,—beautiful life——

[*He opens his eyes wide.*

Oh, Helios, Helios—why didst thou betray me?

[*He dies.*

ORIBASES.

[*After a pause.*] That was death.

THE BYSTANDERS.

Dead—dead!

ORIBASES.

Yes, now he is dead.

[BASIL *and* MAKRINA *kneel in prayer.* EUTHERIUS *veils his head. A sound of drums and trumpets is heard in the distance.*

SHOUTS FROM THE CAMP.

Long live the Emperor Jovian!

ORIBASES.

Oh, heard you that shout?

AMMIAN.

Jovian is proclaimed Emperor.

MAXIMUS.

[*Laughing.*] The Galilean Jovian! Yes—yes—yes!

ORIBASES.

Shameful haste! Before they knew that——

PRISCUS.

Jovian,—the victorious hero who has saved us all! The Emperor Jovian assuredly deserves a panegyric. I trust that crafty Kytron has not already——

[*He hastens out.*

BASIL.

Forgotten, ere your hand is cold. And for this pitiful splendour you sold your immortal soul!

MAXIMUS.

[*Rising.*] The world-will shall answer for Julian's soul!

MAKRINA.

Blaspheme not; though surely you have loved this dead man——

MAXIMUS.

[*Approaching the body.*] Loved, and led him astray—Nay, not *I!*

Led astray like Cain. Led astray like Judas.—Your God is a spendthrift God, Galileans! He wears out many souls.

Wast thou not then, this time either, the chosen one—thou victim on the altar of necessity?

What is it worth to live? All is sport and mockery.—To will is to have to will.

Oh my beloved—all signs deceived me, all auguries spoke with a double tongue, so that I saw in thee the mediator between the two empires.

The third empire shall come! The spirit of man shall re-enter on its heritage—and then shall offerings of atonement[1] be made to thee, and to thy two guests in the symposium. [*He goes out.*

MAKRINA.

[*Rising, pale.*] Basil—did you understand the heathen's speech?

BASIL.

No,—but it dawns on me like a great and radiant light, that here lies a noble, shattered instrument of God.

MAKRINA.

Ay, truly, a dear and dear-bought instrument.

BASIL.

Christ, Christ—how came it that thy people saw not thy manifest design? The Emperor Julian was a rod of chastisement,—not unto death, but unto resurrection.

[1] Here occurs the one clear case I have observed of a revision of the text. In earlier editions the phrase ran "da skal der tændes rögoffer," meaning literally "then shall burnt-offerings (smoke-offerings) be lighted." In the collected edition (1899) "sonoffer" (offerings of atonement) is substituted for "rögoffer." This can scarcely be a printer's error; and as one deliberate alteration has been made, it would seem that the alterations noted on pp. 382 and 417 (especially the former) may also be due, not to the printer, but to the poet.

MAKRINA.

Terrible is the mystery of election. How know we——?

BASIL.

Is it not written: "Some vessels are fashioned to honour, and some to dishonour"?

MAKRINA.

Oh brother, let us not seek to fathom that abyss.

[*She bends over the body and covers the face.*

Erring soul of man—if thou wast indeed f o r c e d to err, it shall surely be accounted to thee for good on that great day when the Mighty One shall descend in the clouds to judge the living dead and the dead who are yet alive!—— ——

THE END.

A DOLL'S HOUSE

GHOSTS

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A DOLL'S HOUSE

INTRODUCTION *

On June 27, 1879, Ibsen wrote from Rome to Marcus Grönvold: "It is now rather hot in Rome, so in about a week we are going to Amalfi, which, being close to the sea, is cooler, and offers opportunity for bathing. I intend to complete there a new dramatic work on which I am now engaged." From Amalfi, on September 20, he wrote to John Paulsen: "A new dramatic work, which I have just completed, has occupied so much of my time during these last months that I have had absolutely none to spare for answering letters." This "new dramatic work" was *Et Dukkehjem*, which was published in Copenhagen, December 4, 1879. Dr. George Brandes has given some account of the episode in real life which suggested to Ibsen the plot of this play; but the real Nora, it appears, committed forgery, not to save her husband's life, but to redecorate her house. The impulse received from this incident must have been trifling. It is much more to the purpose to remember that the character and situation of Nora had been clearly foreshadowed, ten years earlier, in the figure of Selma in *The League of Youth.*

Of *A Doll's House* we find in the *Literary Remains* a first brief memorandum, a fairly detailed scenario, a com-

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plete draft, in quite actable form, and a few detached fragments of dialogue. These documents put out of court a theory of my own[1] that Ibsen originally intended to give the play a "happy ending," and that the relation between Krogstad and Mrs. Linden was devised for that purpose.

Here is the first memorandum:—

NOTES FOR THE[2] TRAGEDY OF TO-DAY

ROME, 19/10/78.

There are two kinds of spiritual laws, two kinds of conscience, one in men and a quite different one in women. They do not understand each other; but the woman is judged in practical life according to the man's law, as if she were not a woman but a man.

The wife in the play finds herself at last entirely at sea as to what is right and what wrong; natural feeling on the one side, and belief in authority on the other, leave her in utter bewilderment.

A woman cannot be herself in the society of to-day, which is exclusively a masculine society, with laws written by men, and with accusers and judges who judge feminine conduct from the masculine standpoint.

She has committed forgery, and it is her pride; for she did it for love of her husband, and to save his life. But this husband, full of everyday rectitude, stands on the basis of the law and regards the matter with a masculine eye.

[1] Stated in the *Fortnightly Review*, July 1906, and repeated in the first edition of this Introduction.

[2] The definite article does not, I think, imply that Ibsen ever intended this to be the title of the play, but merely that the notes refer to "the" tragedy of contemporary life which he has had for some time in his mind.

Soul-struggles. Oppressed and bewildered by belief in authority, she loses her faith in her own moral right and ability to bring up her children. Bitterness. A mother in the society of to-day, like certain insects, (ought to) go away and die when she has done her duty towards the continuance of the species. Love of life, of home, of husband and children and kin. Now and then a woman-like shaking off of cares. Then a sudden return of apprehension and dread. She must bear it all alone. The catastrophe approaches, inexorably, inevitably. Despair, struggle, and disaster.

In reading Ibsen's statement of the conflict he meant to portray between the male and female conscience, one cannot but feel that he somewhat shirked the issue in making Nora's crime a formal rather than a real one. She had no intention of defrauding Krogstad; and though it is an interesting point of casuistry to determine whether, under the stated circumstances, she had a moral right to sign her father's name, opinion on the point would scarcely be divided along the line of sex. One feels that, in order to illustrate the "two kinds of conscience," Ibsen ought to have made his play turn upon some point of conduct (if such there be) which would sharply divide masculine from feminine sympathies. The fact that such a point would be extremely hard to find seems to cast doubt on the ultimate validity of the thesis. If, for instance, Nora had deliberately stolen the money from Krogstad, with no intention of repaying it, that would certainly have revealed a great gulf between her morality and Helmer's; but would any considerable number of her sex have sympathised with her? I am not denying

a marked difference between the average man and the average woman in the development of such characteristics as the sense of justice; but I doubt whether, when women have their full share in legislation, the laws relating to forgery will be seriously altered.

A parallel-text edition of the provisional and the final forms of *A Doll's House* would be intensely interesting. For the present, I can note only a few of the most salient differences between the two versions.

Helmer is at first called "Stenborg";[1] it is not till the scene with Krogstad in the second act that the name Helmer makes its first appearance. Ibsen was constantly changing his characters' names in the course of composition—trying them on, as it were, until he found one that was a perfect fit.

The first scene, down to the entrance of Mrs. Linden, though it contains all that is necessary for the mere development of the plot, runs to only twenty-three speeches, as compared with eighty-one in the completed text. The business of the macaroons is not even indicated; there is none of the charming talk about the Christmas-tree and the children's presents; no request on Nora's part that her present may take the form of money, no indication on Helmer's part that he regards her supposed extravagance as an inheritance from her father. Helmer knows that she toils at copying far into the night in order to earn a few crowns, though of course he has no suspicion as to how she employs the money. Ibsen evidently felt it inconsistent with his character that he should permit

[1] This name seems to have haunted Ibsen. It was also the original name of Stensgård in *The League of Youth.*

this, so in the completed version we learn that Nora, in order to do her copying, locked herself in under the pretext of making decorations for the Christmas-tree, and, when no result appeared, declared that the cat had destroyed her handiwork. The first version, in short, is like a stained glass window seen from without, the second like the same window seen from within.

The long scene between Nora and Mrs. Linden is more fully worked out, though many small touches of character are lacking, such as Nora's remark that some day "when Torvald is not so much in love with me as he is now," she may tell him the great secret of how she saved his life. It is notable throughout that neither Helmer's æstheticism nor the sensual element in his relation to Nora is nearly so much emphasised as in the completed play; while Nora's tendency to small fibbing—that vice of the unfree—is almost an afterthought. In the first appearance of Krogstad, and the indication of his old acquaintance with Mrs. Linden, many small adjustments have been made, all strikingly for the better. The first scene with Dr. Rank, —originally called Dr. Hank—has been almost entirely rewritten. There is in the draft no indication of the doctor's ill-health or of his pessimism; it seems as though he had at first been designed as a mere confidant or *raisonneur*. This is how he talks:—

HANK. Hallo! what's this? A new carpet? I congratulate you! Now take, for example, a handsome carpet like this; is it a luxury? I say it isn't. Such a carpet is a paying investment; with it underfoot, one has higher, subtler thoughts, and finer feelings, than when one moves over cold, creaking planks in a comfortless room.

Especially where there are children in the house. The race ennobles itself in a beautiful environment.

NORA. Oh, how often I have felt the same, but could never express it.

HANK. No, I dare say not. It is an observation in spiritual statistics—a science as yet very little cultivated.

As to Krogstad, the doctor remarks:—

If Krogstad's home had been, so to speak, on the sunny side of life, with all the spiritual windows opening towards the light, . . . I dare say he might have been a decent enough fellow, like the rest of us.

MRS. LINDEN. You mean that he is not. . . .?

HANK. He cannot be. His marriage was not of the kind to make it possible. An unhappy marriage, Mrs. Linden, is like small-pox: it scars the soul.

NORA. And what does a happy marriage do?

HANK. It is like a "cure" at the baths; it expels all peccant humours, and makes all that is good and fine in a man grow and flourish.

It is notable that we find in this scene nothing of Nora's glee on learning that Krogstad is now dependent on her husband; that fine touch of dramatic irony was an afterthought. After Helmer's entrance, the talk is very different in the original version. He remarks upon the painful interview he has just had with Krogstad, whom he is forced to dismiss from the bank; Nora, in a mild way, pleads for him; and the doctor, in the name of the survival of the fittest,[1] denounces humanitarian sentimen-

[1] It is noteworthy that Darwin's two great books were translated into Danish very shortly before Ibsen began to work at *A Doll's House*.

tality, and then goes off to do his best to save a patient who, he confesses, would be much better dead. This discussion of the Krogstad question before Nora has learnt how vital it is to her, manifestly discounts the effect of the scenes which are to follow: and Ibsen, on revision, did away with it entirely.

Nora's romp with the children, interrupted by the entrance of Krogstad, stands very much as in the final version; and in the scene with Krogstad there is no essential change. One detail is worth noting, as an instance of the art of working up an effect. In the first version, when Krogstad says, "Mrs. Stenborg, you must see to it that I keep my place in the bank," Nora replies: "I? How can you think that I have any such influence with my husband?"—a natural but not specially effective remark. But in the final version she has begun the scene by boasting to Krogstad of her influence, and telling him that people in a subordinate position ought to be careful how they offend such influential persons as herself; so that her subsequent denial that he has any influence becomes a notable dramatic effect.

The final scene of the act, between Nora and Helmer, is not materially altered in the final version; but the first version contains no hint of the business of decorating the Christmas-tree or of Nora's wheedling Helmer by pretending to need his aid in devising her costume for the fancy dress ball. Indeed, this ball has not yet entered Ibsen's mind. He thinks of it first as a children's party in the flat overhead, to which Helmer's family are invited.

In the opening scene of the second act there are one or two traits that might perhaps have been preserved, such

as Nora's prayer: "Oh, God! Oh, God! do something to Torvald's mind to prevent him from enraging that terrible man! Oh, God! Oh, God! I have three little children! Do it for my children's sake." Very natural and touching, too, is her exclamation, "Oh, how glorious it would be if I could only wake up, and come to my senses, and cry, 'It was a dream! It was a dream!' " A week, by the way, has passed, instead of a single night, as in the finished play; and Nora has been wearing herself out by going to parties every evening. Helmer enters immediately on the nurse's exit; there is no scene with Mrs. Linden in which she remonstrates with Nora for having (as she thinks) borrowed money from Dr. Rank, and so suggests to her the idea of applying to him for aid. In the scene with Helmer, we miss, among many other characteristic traits, his confession that the ultimate reason why he cannot keep Krogstad in the bank is that Krogstad, an old schoolfellow, is so tactless as to *tutoyer* him. There is a curious little touch in the passage where Helmer draws a contrast between his own strict rectitude and the doubtful character of Nora's father. "I can give you proof of it," he says. "I never cared to mention it before—but the twelve hundred dollars he gave you when you were set on going to Italy he never entered in his books: we have been quite unable to discover where he got them from." When Dr. Rank enters, he speaks to Helmer and Nora together of his failing health; it is an enormous improvement which transfers this passage, in a carefully polished form, to his scene with Nora alone. That scene, in the draft, is almost insignificant. It consists mainly of somewhat melodramatic forecasts of dis-

aster on Nora's part, and the doctor's alarm as to her health. Of the famous silk-stocking scene—that invaluable sidelight on Nora's relation with Helmer there is not a trace. There is no hint of Nora's appeal to Rank for help, nipped in the bud by his declaration of love for her. All these elements we find in a second draft of the scene which has been preserved. In this second draft, Rank says, "Helmer himself might quite well know every thought I have ever had of you; he shall know when I am gone." It might have been better, so far as England is concerned, if Ibsen had retained this speech; it might have prevented much critical misunderstanding of a perfectly harmless and really beautiful episode.

Between the scene with Rank and the scene with Krogstad there intervenes, in the draft, a discussion between Nora and Mrs. Linden, containing this curious passage:—

NORA. When an unhappy wife is separated from her husband she is not allowed to keep her children? Is that really so?

MRS. LINDEN. Yes, I think so. That's to say, if she is guilty.

NORA. Oh, guilty, guilty; what does it mean to be guilty? Has a wife no right to love her husband?

MRS. LINDEN. Yes, precisely, her husband—and him only.

NORA. Why, of course; who was thinking of anything else? But that law is unjust, Kristina. You can see clearly that it is the men that have made it.

MRS. LINDEN. Aha—so you have begun to take up the woman question?

NORA. No, I don't care a bit about it.

The scene with Krogstad is essentially the same as in the final form, though sharpened, so to speak, at many points. The question of suicide was originally discussed in a somewhat melodramatic tone:—

NORA. I have been thinking of nothing else all these days.

KROGSTAD. Perhaps. But how to do it? Poison? Not so easy to get hold of. Shooting? It needs some skill, Mrs. Helmer. Hanging? Bah—there's something ugly in that. . . .

NORA. Do you hear that rushing sound?

KROGSTAD. The river? Yes, of course you have thought of that. But you haven't pictured the thing to yourself.

And he proceeds to do so for her. After he has gone, leaving the letter in the box, Helmer and Rank enter, and Nora implores Helmer to do no work till New Year's Day (the next day) is over. He agrees, but says, "I will just see if any letters have come"; whereupon she rushes to the piano and strikes a few chords. He stops to listen, and she sits down and plays and sings Anitra's song from *Peer Gynt*. When Mrs. Linden presently enters, Nora makes her take her place at the piano, drapes a shawl around her, and dances Anitra's dance. It must be owned that Ibsen has immensely improved this very strained and arbitrary incident by devising the fancy dress ball and the necessity of rehearsing the tarantella for it; but at the best it remains a piece of theatricalism.

As a study in technique, the re-handling of the last act is immensely interesting. At the beginning, in the earlier

form, Nora rushes down from the children's party overhead, and takes a significant farewell of Mrs. Linden, whom she finds awaiting her. Helmer almost forces her to return to the party; and thus the stage is cleared for the scene between Mrs. Linden and Krogstad, which, in the final version, opens the act. Then Nora enters with the two elder children, whom she sends to bed. Helmer immediately follows, and on his heels Dr. Rank, who announces in plain terms that his disease has entered on its last stage, that he is going home to die, and that he will not have Helmer or any one else hanging around his sick-room. In the final version, he says all this to Nora alone in the second act; while in the last act, coming in upon Helmer flushed with wine, and Nora pale and trembling in her masquerade dress, he has a parting scene with them, the significance of which she alone understands. In the earlier version, Rank has several long and heavy speeches in place of the light, swift dialogue of the final form, with its different significance for Helmer and for Nora. There is no trace of the wonderful passage which precedes Rank's exit. To compare the draft with the finished scene is to see a perfect instance of the transmutation of dramatic prose into dramatic poetry.

There is in the draft no indication of Helmer's being warmed with wine, or of the excitement of the senses which gives the final touch of tragedy to Nora's despair. The process of the action is practically the same in both versions; but everywhere in the final form a sharper edge is given to things. One little touch is very significant. In the draft, when Helmer has read the letter with which Krogstad returns the forged bill, he cries, "You are saved,

Nora, you are saved!" In the revision, Ibsen cruelly altered this into, "I am saved, Nora, I am saved!" In the final scene, where Nora is telling Helmer how she expected him, when the revelation came, to take all the guilt upon himself, we look in vain, in the first draft, for this passage:—

HELMER. I would gladly work for you night and day, Nora—bear sorrow and want for your sake. But no man sacrifices his honour, even for one he loves.

NORA. Millions of women have done so.

This, then, was an afterthought: was there ever a more brilliant one?

It is with *A Doll's House* that Ibsen enters upon his kingdom as a world-poet. He had done greater work in the past, and he was to do greater work in the future; but this was the play which was destined to carry his name beyond the limits of Scandinavia, and even of Germany, to the remotest regions of civilisation. Here the Fates were not altogether kind to him. The fact that for many years he was known to thousands of people solely as the author of *A Doll's House* and its successor, *Ghosts*, was largely responsible for the extravagant misconceptions of his genius and character which prevailed during the last decade of the nineteenth century, and are not yet entirely extinct. In these plays he seemed to be delivering a direct assault on marriage, from the standpoint of feminine individualism; wherefore he was taken to be a preacher and pamphleteer rather than a poet. In these plays, and in these only, he made physical disease a considerable factor

in the action; whence it was concluded that he had a morbid predilection for "nauseous" subjects. In these plays he laid special and perhaps disproportionate stress on the influence of heredity; whence he was believed to be possessed by a monomania on the point. In these plays, finally, he was trying to act the essentially uncongenial part of the prosaic realist. The effort broke down at many points, and the poet reasserted himself; but these flaws in the prosaic texture were regarded as mere bewildering errors and eccentricities. In short, he was introduced to the world at large through two plays which showed his power, indeed, almost in perfection, but left the higher and subtler qualities of his genius for the most part unrepresented. Hence the grotesquely distorted vision of him which for so long haunted the minds even of intelligent people. Hence, for example, the amazing opinion, given forth as a truism by more than one critic of great ability, that the author of *Peer Gynt* was devoid of humour.

Within a little more than a fortnight of its publication, *A Doll's House* was presented at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, where Fru Hennings, as Nora, made the great success of her career. The play was soon being acted, as well as read, all over Scandinavia. Nora's startling "declaration of independence" afforded such an inexhaustible theme for heated discussion, that at last it had to be formally barred at social gatherings, just as, in Paris twenty years later, the Dreyfus Case was proclaimed a prohibited topic. The popularity of *Pillars of Society* in Germany had paved the way for its successor, which spread far and wide over the German stage in the

spring of 1880, and has ever since held its place in the repertory of the leading theatres. As his works were at that time wholly unprotected in Germany, Ibsen could not prevent managers from altering the end of the play to suit their taste and fancy. He was thus driven, under protest, to write an alternative ending, in which, at the last moment, the thought of her children restrained Nora from leaving home. He preferred, as he said, "to commit the outrage himself, rather than leave his work to the tender mercies of adaptors." The patched-up ending soon dropped out of use and out of memory. Ibsen's own account of the matter will be found in his *Correspondence*, Letter 142.

It took ten years for the play to pass beyond the limits of Scandinavia and Germany. Madame Modjeska, it is true, presented a version of it in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1883, but it attracted no attention. In the following year Messrs. Henry Arthur Jones and Henry Herman produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, London, a play entitled *Breaking a Butterfly*, which was described as being "founded on Ibsen's *Norah*," but bore only a remote resemblance to the original. In this production Mr. Beerbohm Tree took the part of Dunkley, a melodramatic villain who filled the place of Krogstad. In 1885, again, an adventurous amateur club gave a quaint performance of Miss Lord's translation of the play at a hall in Argyle Street, London. Not until June 7, 1889, was *A Doll's House* competently, and even brilliantly, presented to the English public, by Mr. Charles Charrington and Miss Janet Achurch, at the Novelty Theatre, London, afterwards re-named the Kingsway Theatre.

It was this production that really made Ibsen known to the English-speaking peoples. In other words, it marked his second great stride towards world-wide, as distinct from merely national, renown—if we reckon as the first stride the success of *Pillars of Society* in Germany. Mr. and Mrs. Charrington took *A Doll's House* with them on a long Australian tour; Miss Beatrice Cameron (Mrs. Richard Mansfield) was encouraged by the success of the London production to present the play in New York, whence it soon spread to other American cities; while in London itself it was frequently revived and vehemently discussed. The Ibsen controversy, indeed, did not break out in its full virulence until 1891, when *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler* were produced in London; but from the date of the Novelty production onwards, Ibsen was generally recognised as a potent factor in the intellectual and artistic life of the day.

A French adaptation of *Et Dukkehjem* was produced in Brussels in March 1889, but attracted little attention. Not until 1894 was the play introduced to the Parisian public, at the Gymnase, with Madame Réjane as Nora. This actress has since played the part frequently, not only in Paris but in London and in America. In Italian the play was first produced in 1889, and soon passed into the repertory of Eleonora Duse, who appeared as Nora in London in 1893. Few heroines in modern drama have been played by so many actresses of the first rank. To those already enumerated must be added Hedwig Niemann-Raabe and Agnes Sorma in Germany, and Minnie Maddern-Fiske and Alla Nazimova in America; and, even so, the list is far from complete. There is probably

no country in the world, possessing a theatre on the European model, in which *A Doll's House* has not been more or less frequently acted.

Undoubtedly the great attraction of the part of Nora to the average actress was the tarantella scene. This was a theatrical effect, of an obvious, unmistakable kind. It might have been—though I am not aware that it ever actually was—made the subject of a picture-poster. But this, as it seems to me, was Ibsen's last concession to the ideal of technique which he had acquired, in the old Bergen days, from his French masters. It was at this point—or, more precisely, a little later, in the middle of the third act—that Ibsen definitely outgrew the theatrical orthodoxy of his earlier years. When the action, in the theatrical sense, was over, he found himself only on the threshold of the essential drama; and in that drama, compressed into the final scene of the play, he proclaimed his true power and his true mission.

How impossible, in his subsequent work, would be such figures as Mrs. Linden, the confidant, and Krogstad, the villain! They are not quite the ordinary confidant and villain, for Ibsen is always Ibsen, and his power of vitalisation is extraordinary. Yet we clearly feel them to belong to a different order of art from that of his later plays. How impossible, too, in the poet's after years, would have been the little tricks of ironic coincidence and picturesque contrast which abound in *A Doll's House!* The festal atmosphere of the whole play, the Christmas-tree, the tarantella, the masquerade ball, with its distant sounds of music—all the shimmer and tinsel of the background, against which Nora's soul-torture and Rank's despair are

thrown into relief, belong to the system of external, artificial antithesis beloved by romantic playwrights from Lope de Vega onward, and carried to its limit by Victor Hugo. The same artificiality is apparent in minor details. "Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to live to be happy!" cries Nora, and instantly "The hall-door bell rings" and Krogstad's shadow falls across the threshold. So, too, for his second entrance, an elaborate effect of contrast is arranged, between Nora's gleeful romp with her children and the sinister figure which stands unannounced in their midst. It would be too much to call these things absolutely unnatural, but the very precision of the coincidence is eloquent of pre-arrangement. At any rate, they belong to an order of effects which in future Ibsen sedulously eschews. The one apparent exception to this rule which I can remember occurs in *The Master Builder*, where Solness's remark, "Presently the younger generation will come knocking at my door," gives the cue for Hilda's knock and entrance. But here an interesting distinction is to be noted. Throughout *The Master Builder* the poet subtly indicates the operation of mysterious, unseen agencies—the "helpers and servers" of whom Solness speaks, as well as the Power with which he held converse at the crisis in his life—guiding, or at any rate tampering with, the destinies of the characters. This being so, it is evident that the effect of pre-arrangement produced by Hilda's appearing exactly on the given cue was deliberately aimed at. Like so many other details in the play, it might be a mere coincidence, or it might be a result of inscrutable design—we were purposely left in doubt. But the suggestion of pre-

arrangement which helped to create the atmosphere of *The Master Builder* was wholly out of place in *A Doll's House*. In the later play it was a subtle stroke of art; in the earlier it was the effect of imperfectly dissembled artifice.

The fact that Ibsen's full originality first reveals itself in the latter half of the third act is proved by the very protests, nay, the actual rebellion, which the last scene called forth. Up to that point he had been doing, approximately, what theatrical orthodoxy demanded of him. But when Nora, having put off her masquerade dress, returned to make up her account with Helmer, and with marriage as Helmer understood it, the poet flew in the face of orthodoxy, and its professors cried out in bewilderment and wrath. But it was just at this point that, in practice, the real grip and thrill of the drama were found to come in. The tarantella scene never, in my experience—and I have seen five or six great actresses in the part—produced an effect in any degree commensurate with the effort involved. But when Nora and Helmer faced each other, one on each side of the table, and set to work to ravel out the skein of their illusions, then one felt oneself face to face with a new thing in drama—an order of experience, at once intellectual and emotional, not hitherto attained in the theatre. This every one felt, I think, who was in any way accessible to that order of experience. For my own part, I shall never forget how surprised I was on first seeing the play, to find this scene, in its naked simplicity, far more exciting and moving than all the artfully-arranged situations of the earlier acts. To the same effect, from another point of view, we

have the testimony of Fru Hennings, the first actress who ever played the part of Nora. In an interview published soon after Ibsen's death, she spoke of the delight it was to her, in her youth, to embody the Nora of the first and second acts, the "lark," the "squirrel," the irresponsible, butterfly Nora. "When I now play the part," she went on, "the first acts leave me indifferent. Not until the third act am I really interested—but then, intensely." To call the first and second acts positively uninteresting would of course be a gross exaggeration. What one really means is that their workmanship is still a little derivative and immature, and that not until the third act does the poet reveal the full originality and individuality of his genius.

A DOLL'S HOUSE

CHARACTERS

TORVALD HELMER.
NORA, *his wife.*
DOCTOR RANK.
MRS. LINDEN.[1]
NILS KROGSTAD.
THE HELMERS' THREE CHILDREN.
ANNA,[2] *their nurse.*
A MAID-SERVANT (ELLEN).
A PORTER.

The action passes in Helmer's house (a flat) in Christiania.

[1] In the original "Fru Linde."
[2] In the original "Anne-Marie."

A DOLL'S HOUSE

ACT FIRST

A room, comfortably and tastefully, but not expensively, furnished. In the back, on the right, a door leads to the hall; on the left another door leads to HELMER'S *study. Between the two doors a pianoforte. In the middle of the left wall a door, and nearer the front a window. Near the window a round table with arm-chairs and a small sofa. In the right wall, somewhat to the back, a door, and against the same wall, further forward, a porcelain stove; in front of it a couple of arm-chairs and a rocking-chair. Between the stove and the side-door a small table. Engravings on the walls. A what-not with china and bric-à-brac. A small bookcase filled with handsomely bound books. Carpet. A fire in the stove. It is a winter day.*

A bell rings in the hall outside. Presently the outer door of the flat is heard to open. Then NORA *enters, humming gaily. She is in outdoor dress, and carries several parcels, which she lays on the right-hand table. She leaves the door into the hall open, and a* PORTER *is seen outside, carrying a Christmas-tree and a basket, which he gives to the* MAID-SERVANT *who has opened the door.*

NORA.

Hide the Christmas-tree carefully, Ellen; the children must on no account see it before this evening, when it's

lighted up. [*To the* PORTER, *taking out her purse.*] How much?

PORTER.

Fifty öre.[1]

NORA.

There is a crown. No, keep the change.

[*The* PORTER *thanks her and goes.* NORA *shuts the door. She continues smiling in quiet glee as she takes off her outdoor things. Taking from her pocket a bag of macaroons, she eats one or two. Then she goes on tip-toe to her husband's door and listens.*

NORA.

Yes; he is at home.

[*She begins humming again, crossing to the table on the right.*

HELMER.

[*In his room.*] Is that my lark twittering there?

NORA.

[*Busy opening some of her parcels.*] Yes, it is.

HELMER.

Is it the squirrel frisking around?

NORA.

Yes!

HELMER.

When did the squirrel get home?

[1] About sixpence. There are 100 öre in a krone or crown, which is worth thirteenpence halfpenny.

NORA.

Just this minute. [*Hides the bag of macaroons in her pocket and wipes her mouth.*] Come here, Torvald, and see what I've been buying.

HELMER.

Don't interrupt me. [*A little later he opens the door and looks in, pen in hand.*] Buying, did you say? What! All that? Has my little spendthrift been making the money fly again?

NORA.

Why, Torvald, surely we can afford to launch out a little now. It's the first Christmas we haven't had to pinch.

HELMER.

Come come; we can't afford to squander money.

NORA.

Oh yes, Torvald, do let us squander a little, now—just the least little bit! You know you'll soon be earning heaps of money.

HELMER.

Yes, from New Year's Day. But there's a whole quarter before my first salary is due.

NORA.

Never mind; we can borrow in the meantime.

HELMER.

Nora! [*He goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear.*] Still my little featherbrain! Supposing I bor-

rowed a thousand crowns to-day, and you made ducks and drakes of them during Christmas week, and then on New Year's Eve a tile blew off the roof and knocked my brains out——

NORA.

[*Laying her hand on his mouth.*] Hush! How can you talk so horridly?

HELMER.

But supposing it were to happen—what then?

NORA.

If anything so dreadful happened, it would be all the same to me whether I was in debt or not.

HELMER.

But what about the creditors?

NORA.

They! Who cares for them? They're only strangers.

HELMER.

Nora, Nora! What a w o m a n you are! But seriously, Nora, you know my principles on these points. No debts! No borrowing! Home life ceases to be free and beautiful as soon as it is founded on borrowing and debt. We two have held out bravely till now, and we are not going to give in at the last.

NORA.

[*Going to the fireplace.*] Very well—as you please, Torvald.

HELMER.

[*Following her.*] Come come; my little lark mustn't droop her wings like that. What? Is my squirrel in the sulks? [*Takes out his purse.*] Nora, what do you think I have here?

NORA.

[*Turning round quickly.*] Money!

HELMER.

There! [*Gives her some notes.*] Of course I know all sorts of things are wanted at Christmas.

NORA.

[*Counting.*] Ten, twenty, thirty, forty. Oh, thank you, thank you, Torvald! This will go a long way.

HELMER.

I should hope so.

NORA.

Yes, indeed; a long way! But come here, and let me show you all I've been buying. And so cheap! Look, here's a new suit for Ivar, and a little sword. Here are a horse and a trumpet for Bob. And here are a doll and a cradle for Emmy. They're only common; but they're good enough for her to pull to pieces. And dress-stuffs and kerchiefs for the servants. I ought to have got something better for old Anna.

HELMER.

And what's in that other parcel?

NORA.

[*Crying out.*] No, Torvald, you're not to see that until this evening.

HELMER.

Oh! Ah! But now tell me, you little spendthrift, have you thought of anything for yourself?

NORA.

For myself! Oh, I don't want anything.

HELMER.

Nonsense! Just tell me something sensible you would like to have.

NORA.

No, really I don't know of anything—— Well, listen, Torvald——

HELMER.

Well?

NORA.

[*Playing with his coat-buttons, without looking him in the face.*] If you really want to give me something, you might, you know—you might——

HELMER.

Well? Out with it!

NORA.

[*Quickly.*] You might give me money, Torvald. Only just what you think you can spare; then I can buy something with it later on.

HELMER.

But, Nora——

NORA.

Oh, please do, dear Torvald, please do! I should hang the money in lovely gilt paper on the Christmas-tree. Wouldn't that be fun?

HELMER.

What do they call the birds that are always making the money fly?

NORA.

Yes, I know—spendthrifts,[1] of course. But please do as I ask you, Torvald. Then I shall have time to think what I want most. Isn't that very sensible, now?

HELMER.

[*Smiling.*] Certainly; that is to say, if you really kept the money I gave you, and really spent it on something for yourself. But it all goes in housekeeping, and for all manner of useless things, and then I have to pay up again.

NORA.

But, Torvald——

HELMER.

Can you deny it, Nora dear? [*He puts his arm round her.*] It's a sweet little lark, but it gets through a lot of money. No one would believe how much it costs a man to keep such a little bird as you.

[1] "Spillefugl," literally "playbird," means a gambler.

NORA.

For shame! How can you say so? Why, I save as much as ever I can.

HELMER.

[*Laughing.*] Very true—as much as you can—but that's precisely nothing.

NORA.

[*Hums and smiles with covert glee.*] H'm! If you only knew, Torvald, what expenses we larks and squirrels have.

HELMER.

You're a strange little being! Just like your father—always on the look-out for all the money you can lay your hands on; but the moment you have it, it seems to slip through your fingers; you never know what becomes of it. Well, one must take you as you are. It's in the blood. Yes, Nora, that sort of thing is hereditary.

NORA.

I wish I had inherited many of papa's qualities.

HELMER.

And I don't wish you anything but just what you are—my own, sweet little song-bird. But I say—it strikes me you look so—so—what shall I call it?—so suspicious to-day——

NORA.

Do I?

HELMER.

You do, indeed. Look me full in the face.

NORA.

[*Looking at him.*] Well?

HELMER.

[*Threatening with his finger.*] Hasn't the little sweet-tooth been playing pranks to-day?

NORA.

No; how can you think such a thing!

HELMER.

Didn't she just look in at the confectioner's?

NORA.

No, Torvald; really——

HELMER.

Not to sip a little jelly?

NORA.

No; certainly not.

HELMER.

Hasn't she even nibbled a macaroon or two?

NORA.

No, Torvald, indeed, indeed!

HELMER.

Well, well, well; of course I'm only joking.

NORA.

[*Goes to the table on the right.*] I shouldn't think of doing what you disapprove of.

HELMER.

No, I'm sure of that; and, besides, you've given me your word—— [*Going towards her.*] Well, keep your little Christmas secrets to yourself, Nora darling. The Christmas-tree will bring them all to light, I daresay.

NORA.

Have you remembered to invite Doctor Rank?

HELMER.

No. But it's not necessary; he'll come as a matter of course. Besides, I shall ask him when he looks in to-day. I've ordered some capital wine. Nora, you can't think how I look forward to this evening.

NORA.

And I too. How the children will enjoy themselves, Torvald!

HELMER.

Ah, it's glorious to feel that one has an assured position and ample means. Isn't it delightful to think of?

NORA.

Oh, it's wonderful!

HELMER.

Do you remember last Christmas? For three whole weeks beforehand you shut yourself up every evening till

long past midnight to make flowers for the Christmas-tree, and all sorts of other marvels that were to have astonished us. I was never so bored in my life.

NORA.

I didn't bore myself at all.

HELMER.

[*Smiling.*] But it came to little enough in the end, Nora.

NORA.

Oh, are you going to tease me about that again? How could I help the cat getting in and pulling it all to pieces?

HELMER.

To be sure you couldn't, my poor little Nora. You did your best to give us all pleasure, and that's the main point. But, all the same, it's a good thing the hard times are over.

NORA.

Oh, isn't it wonderful?

HELMER.

Now I needn't sit here boring myself all alone; and you needn't tire your blessed eyes and your delicate little fingers——

NORA.

[*Clapping her hands.*] No, I needn't, need I, Torvald? Oh, how wonderful it is to think of? [*Takes his arm.*] And now I'll tell you how I think we ought to manage,

Torvald. As soon as Christmas is over—— [*The hall-door bell rings.*] Oh, there's a ring! [*Arranging the room.*] That's somebody come to call. How tiresome!

HELMER.

I'm "not at home" to callers; remember that.

ELLEN.

[*In the doorway.*] A lady to see you, ma'am.

NORA.

Show her in.

ELLEN.

[*To* HELMER.] And the doctor has just come, sir.

HELMER.

Has he gone into my study?

ELLEN.

Yes, sir.

[HELMER *goes into his study.* ELLEN *ushers in* MRS. LINDEN, *in travelling costume, and goes out, closing the door.*

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Embarrassed and hesitating.*] How do you do, Nora?

NORA.

[*Doubtfully.*] How do you do?

MRS. LINDEN.

I see you don't recognise me!

NORA.

No, I don't think—oh yes!—I believe—— [*Suddenly brightening.*] What, Christina! Is it really you?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes; really I!

NORA.

Christina! And to think I didn't know you! But how could I—— [*More softly.*] How changed you are, Christina!

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes, no doubt. In nine or ten years——

NORA.

Is it really so long since we met? Yes, so it is. Oh, the last eight years have been a happy time, I can tell you. And now you have come to town? All that long journey in mid-winter! How brave of you!

MRS. LINDEN.

I arrived by this morning's steamer.

NORA.

To have a merry Christmas, of course. Oh, how delightful! Yes, we will have a merry Christmas. Do take your things off. Aren't you frozen? [*Helping her.*] There; now we'll sit cosily by the fire. No, you take the arm-chair; I shall sit in this rocking-chair. [*Seizes her hands.*] Yes, now I can see the dear old face again. It was only at the first glance—— But you're a little paler, Christina—and perhaps a little thinner.

MRS. LINDEN.

And much, much older, Nora.

NORA.

Yes, perhaps a little older—not much—ever so little. [*She suddenly checks herself; seriously.*] Oh, what a thoughtless wretch I am! Here I sit chattering on, and—— Dear, dear Christina, can you forgive me!

MRS. LINDEN.

What do you mean, Nora?

NORA.

[*Softly.*] Poor Christina! I forgot: you are a widow.

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes; my husband died three years ago.

NORA.

I know, I know; I saw it in the papers. Oh, believe me, Christina, I did mean to write to you; but I kept putting it off, and something always came in the way.

MRS. LINDEN.

I can quite understand that, Nora dear.

NORA.

No, Christina; it was horrid of me. Oh, you poor darling! how much you must have gone through!—And he left you nothing?

MRS. LINDEN.

Nothing.

NORA.

And no children?

MRS. LINDEN.

None.

NORA.

Nothing, nothing at all?

MRS. LINDEN.

Not even a sorrow or a longing to dwell upon.

NORA.

[*Looking at her incredulously.*] My dear Christina, how is that possible?

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Smiling sadly and stroking her hair.*] Oh, it happens so sometimes, Nora.

NORA.

So utterly alone! How dreadful that must be! I have three of the loveliest children. I can't show them to you just now; they're out with their nurse. But now you must tell me everything.

MRS. LINDEN.

No, no; I want you to tell me——

NORA.

No, you must begin; I won't be egotistical to-day. To-day I'll think only of you. Oh! but I must tell you

one thing—perhaps you've heard of our great stroke of fortune?

MRS. LINDEN.

No. What is it?

NORA.

Only think! my husband has been made manager of the Joint Stock Bank.

MRS. LINDEN.

Your husband! Oh, how fortunate!

NORA.

Yes; isn't it? A lawyer's position is so uncertain, you see, especially when he won't touch any business that's the least bit—shady, as of course Torvald never would; and there I quite agree with him. Oh! you can imagine how glad we are. He is to enter on his new position at the New Year, and then he'll have a large salary, and percentages. In future we shall be able to live quite differently—just as we please, in fact. Oh, Christina, I feel so lighthearted and happy! It's delightful to have lots of money, and no need to worry about things, isn't it?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes; at any rate it must be delightful to have what you need.

NORA.

No, not only what you need, but heaps of money—heaps!

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Smiling.*] Nora, Nora, haven't you learnt reason yet? In our schooldays you were a shocking little spendthrift.

NORA.

[*Quietly smiling.*] Yes; that's what Torvald says I am still. [*Holding up her forefinger.*] But "Nora, Nora" is not so silly as you all think. Oh! I haven't had the chance to be much of a spendthrift. We have both had to work.

MRS. LINDEN.

You too?

NORA.

Yes, light fancy work: crochet, and embroidery, and things of that sort; [*Carelessly*] and other work too. You know, of course, that Torvald left the Government service when we were married. He had little chance of promotion, and of course he required to make more money. But in the first year after our marriage he overworked himself terribly. He had to undertake all sorts of extra work, you know, and to slave early and late. He couldn't stand it, and fell dangerously ill. Then the doctors declared he must go to the South.

MRS. LINDEN.

You spent a whole year in Italy, didn't you?

NORA.

Yes, we did. It wasn't easy to manage, I can tell you. It was just after Ivar's birth. But of course we had to

go. Oh, it was a wonderful, delicious journey! And it saved Torvald's life. But it cost a frightful lot of money, Christina.

MRS. LINDEN.

So I should think.

NORA.

Twelve hundred dollars! Four thousand eight hundred crowns![1] Isn't that a lot of money?

MRS. LINDEN.

How lucky you had the money to spend!

NORA.

We got it from father, you must know.

MRS. LINDEN.

Ah, I see. He died just about that time, didn't he?

NORA.

Yes, Christina, just then. And only think! I couldn't go and nurse him! I was expecting little Ivar's birth daily; and then I had my poor sick Torvald to attend to. Dear, kind old father! I never saw him again, Christina. Oh! that's the hardest thing I have had to bear since my marriage.

MRS. LINDEN.

I know how fond you were of him. But then you went to Italy?

[1] The dollar (4*s.* 6*d.*) was the old unit of currency in Norway. The crown was substituted for it shortly before the date of this play.

NORA.

Yes; you see, we had the money, and the doctors said we must lose no time. We started a month later.

MRS. LINDEN.

And your husband came back completely cured.

NORA.

Sound as a bell.

MRS. LINDEN.

But—the doctor?

NORA.

What do you mean?

MRS. LINDEN.

I thought as I came in your servant announced the doctor——

NORA.

Oh, yes; Doctor Rank. But he doesn't come professionally. He is our best friend, and never lets a day pass without looking in. No, Torvald hasn't had an hour's illness since that time. And the children are so healthy and well, and so am I. [*Jumps up and claps her hands.*] Oh, Christina, Christina, what a wonderful thing it is to live and to be happy!—Oh, but it's really too horrid of me! Here am I talking about nothing but my own concerns. [*Seats herself upon a footstool close to* CHRISTINA, *and lays her arms on her friend's lap.*] Oh, don't be angry with me! Now tell me, is it really true that you didn't love your husband? What made you marry him, then?

MRS. LINDEN.

My mother was still alive, you see, bedridden and helpless; and then I had my two younger brothers to think of. I didn't think it would be right for me to refuse him.

NORA.

Perhaps it wouldn't have been. I suppose he was rich then?

MRS. LINDEN.

Very well off, I believe. But his business was uncertain. It fell to pieces at his death, and there was nothing left.

NORA.

And then——?

MRS. LINDEN.

Then I had to fight my way by keeping a shop, a little school, anything I could turn my hand to. The last three years have been one long struggle for me. But now it is over, Nora. My poor mother no longer needs me; she is at rest. And the boys are in business, and can look after themselves.

NORA.

How free your life must feel!

MRS. LINDEN.

No, Nora; only inexpressibly empty. No one to live for! [*Stands up restlessly.*] That's why I could not bear to stay any longer in that out-of-the-way corner. Here it must be easier to find something to take one up—to occupy one's thoughts. If I could only get some settled employment—some office work.

NORA.

But, Christina, that's such drudgery, and you look worn out already. It would be ever so much better for you to go to some watering-place and rest.

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Going to the window.*] I have no father to give me the money, Nora.

NORA.

[*Rising.*] Oh, don't be vexed with me.

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Going to her.*] My dear Nora, don't you be vexed with me. The worst of a position like mine is that it makes one so bitter. You have no one to work for, yet you have to be always on the strain. You must live; and so you become selfish. When I heard of the happy change in your fortunes—can you believe it?—I was glad for my own sake more than for yours.

NORA.

How do you mean? Ah, I see! You think Torvald can perhaps do something for you.

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes; I thought so.

NORA.

And so he shall, Christina. Just you leave it all to me. I shall lead up to it beautifully!—I shall think of some

delightful plan to put him in a good humour! Oh, I should so love to help you.

MRS. LINDEN.

How good of you, Nora, to stand by me so warmly! Doubly good in you, who knows so little of the troubles and burdens of life.

NORA.

I? I know so little of——?

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Smiling.*] Oh, well—a little fancy-work, and so forth. —You're a child, Nora.

NORA.

[*Tosses her head and paces the room.*] Oh, come, you mustn't be so patronising!

MRS. LINDEN.

No?

NORA.

You're like the rest. You all think I'm fit for nothing really serious——

MRS. LINDEN.

Well, well——

NORA.

You think I've had no troubles in this weary world.

MRS. LINDEN.

My dear Nora, you've just told me all your troubles.

NORA.

Pooh—those trifles! [*Softly.*] I haven't told you the great thing.

MRS. LINDEN.

The great thing? What do you mean?

NORA.

I know you look down upon me, Christina; but you have no right to. You are proud of having worked so hard and so long for your mother.

MRS. LINDEN.

I am sure I don't look down upon any one; but it's true I am both proud and glad when I remember that I was able to keep my mother's last days free from care.

NORA.

And you're proud to think of what you have done for your brothers, too.

MRS. LINDEN.

Have I not the right to be?

NORA.

Yes indeed. But now let me tell you, Christina—I, too, have something to be proud and glad of.

MRS. LINDEN.

I don't doubt it. But what do you mean?

NORA.

Hush! Not so loud. Only think, if Torvald were to hear! He mustn't—not for worlds! No one must know about it, Christina—no one but you.

MRS LINDEN.

Why, what can it be?

NORA.

Come over here. [*Draws her down beside her on the sofa.*] Yes, Christina—I, too, have something to be proud and glad of. I saved Torvald's life.

MRS. LINDEN.

Saved his life? How?

NORA.

I told you about our going to Italy. Torvald would have died but for that.

MRS. LINDEN.

Well—and your father gave you the money.

NORA.

[*Smiling.*] Yes, so Torvald and every one believes; but——

MRS. LINDEN.

But——?

NORA.

Papa didn't give us one penny. It was *I* that found the money.

MRS. LINDEN.

You? All that money?

NORA.

Twelve hundred dollars. Four thousand eight hundred crowns. What do you say to that?

MRS. LINDEN.

My dear Nora, how did you manage it? Did you win it in the lottery?

NORA.

[*Contemptuously.*] In the lottery? Pooh! Any one could have done t h a t!

MRS. LINDEN.

Then wherever did you get it from?

NORA.

[*Hums and smiles mysteriously.*] H'm; tra-la-la-la!

MRS. LINDEN.

Of course you couldn't borrow it.

NORA.

No? Why not?

MRS. LINDEN.

Why, a wife can't borrow without her husband's consent.

NORA.

[*Tossing her head.*] Oh! when the wife has some idea of business, and knows how to set about things——

MRS. LINDEN.

But, Nora, I don't understand——

NORA.

Well, you needn't. I never said I borrowed the money. There are many ways I may have got it. [*Throws herself back on the sofa.*] I may have got it from some admirer. When one is so—attractive as I am——

MRS. LINDEN.

You're too silly, Nora.

NORA.

Now I'm sure you're dying of curiosity, Christina——

MRS. LINDEN.

Listen to me, Nora dear: haven't you been a little rash?

NORA.

[*Sitting upright again.*] Is it rash to save one's husband's life?

MRS. LINDEN.

I think it was rash of you, without his knowledge——

NORA.

But it would have been fatal for him to know! Can't you understand that? He wasn't even to suspect how

ill he was. The doctors came to me privately and told me his life was in danger—that nothing could save him but a winter in the South. Do you think I didn't try diplomacy first? I told him how I longed to have a trip abroad, like other young wives; I wept and prayed; I said he ought to think of my condition, and not to thwart me; and then I hinted that he could borrow the money. But then, Christina, he got almost angry. He said I was frivolous, and that it was his duty as a husband not to yield to my whims and fancies—so he called them. Very well, thought I, but saved you must be; and then I found the way to do it.

MRS. LINDEN.

And did your husband never learn from your father that the money was not from him?

NORA.

No; never. Papa died at that very time. I meant to have told him all about it, and begged him to say nothing. But he was so ill—unhappily, it wasn't necessary.

MRS. LINDEN.

And you have never confessed to your husband?

NORA.

Good heavens! What can you be thinking of? Tell him, when he has such a loathing of debt! And besides—how painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald, with his manly self-respect, to know that he owed anything to me! It would utterly upset the relation between us; our beautiful, happy home would never again be what it is.

MRS. LINDEN.

Will you never tell him?

NORA.

[*Thoughtfully, half-smiling.*] Yes, some time perhaps —many, many years hence, when I'm—not so pretty. You mustn't laugh at me! Of course I mean when Torvald is not so much in love with me as he is now; when it doesn't amuse him any longer to see me dancing about, and dressing up and acting. Then it might be well to have something in reserve. [*Breaking off.*] Nonsense! nonsense! That time will never come. Now, what do you say to my grand secret, Christina? Am I fit for nothing now? You may believe it has cost me a lot of anxiety. It has been no joke to meet my engagements punctually. You must know, Christina, that in business there are things called instalments, and quarterly interest, that are terribly hard to provide for. So I've had to pinch a little here and there, wherever I could. I couldn't save much out of the housekeeping, for of course Torvald had to live well. And I couldn't let the children go about badly dressed; all I got for them, I spent on them, the blessed darlings!

MRS. LINDEN.

Poor Nora! So it had to come out of your own pocket-money.

NORA.

Yes, of course. After all, the whole thing was my doing. When Torvald gave me money for clothes, and so on, I never spent more than half of it; I always bought the simplest and cheapest things. It's a mercy that every-

thing suits me so well—Torvald never had any suspicions. But it was often very hard, Christina dear. For it's nice to be beautifully dressed—now, isn't it?

MRS. LINDEN.

Indeed it is.

NORA.

Well, and besides that, I made money in other ways. Last winter I was so lucky—I got a heap of copying to do. I shut myself up every evening and wrote far into the night. Oh, sometimes I was so tired, so tired. And yet it was splendid to work in that way and earn money. I almost felt as if I was a man.

MRS. LINDEN.

Then how much have you been able to pay off?

NORA.

Well, I can't precisely say. It's difficult to keep that sort of business clear. I only know that I've paid everything I could scrape together. Sometimes I really didn't know where to turn. [*Smiles.*] Then I used to sit here and pretend that a rich old gentleman was in love with me——

MRS. LINDEN.

What! What gentleman?

NORA.

Oh, nobody!—that he was dead now, and that when his will was opened, there stood in large letters: "Pay over at once everything of which I die possessed to that charming person, Mrs. Nora Helmer."

MRS. LINDEN.

But, my dear Nora—what gentleman do you mean?

NORA.

Oh dear, can't you understand? There wasn't any old gentleman: it was only what I used to dream and dream when I was at my wits' end for money. But it doesn't matter now—the tiresome old creature may stay where he is for me. I care nothing for him or his will; for now my troubles are over. [*Springing up.*] Oh, Christina, how glorious it is to think of! Free from all anxiety! Free, quite free. To be able to play and romp about with the children; to have things tasteful and pretty in the house, exactly as Torvald likes it! And then the spring will soon be here, with the great blue sky. Perhaps then we shall have a little holiday. Perhaps I shall see the sea again. Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to live and to be happy!

[*The hall-door bell rings.*

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Rising.*] There's a ring. Perhaps I had better go.

NORA.

No; do stay. No one will come here. It's sure to be some one for Torvald.

ELLEN.

[*In the doorway.*] If you please, ma'am, there's a gentleman to speak to Mr. Helmer.

NORA.

Who is the gentleman?

KROGSTAD.

[*In the doorway.*] It is I, Mrs. Helmer.

[MRS. LINDEN *starts and turns away to the window.*

NORA.

[*Goes a step towards him, anxiously, speaking low.*] You? What is it? What do you want with my husband?

KROGSTAD.

Bank business—in a way. I hold a small post in the Joint Stock Bank, and your husband is to be our new chief, I hear.

NORA.

Then it is——?

KROGSTAD.

Only tiresome business, Mrs. Helmer; nothing more.

NORA.

Then will you please go to his study.

[KROGSTAD *goes. She bows indifferently while she closes the door into the hall. Then she goes to the stove and looks to the fire.*

MRS. LINDEN.

Nora—who was that man?

NORA.

A Mr. Krogstad—a lawyer.

MRS. LINDEN.

Then it was really he?

NORA.

Do you know him?

MRS. LINDEN.

I used to know him—many years ago. He was in a lawyer's office in our town.

NORA.

Yes, so he was.

MRS. LINDEN.

How he has changed!

NORA.

I believe his marriage was unhappy.

MRS. LINDEN.

And he is a widower now?

NORA.

With a lot of children. There! Now it will burn up.
[*She closes the stove, and pushes the rocking-chair a little aside.*

MRS. LINDEN.

His business is not of the most creditable, they say?

NORA.

Isn't it? I daresay not. I don't know. But don't let us think of business—it's so tiresome.

DR. RANK *comes out of* HELMER'S *room.*

RANK.

[*Still in the doorway.*] No, no; I'm in your way. I shall go and have a chat with your wife. [*Shuts the door and sees* MRS. LINDEN.] Oh, I beg your pardon. I'm in the way here too.

NORA.

No, not in the least. [*Introduces them.*] Doctor Rank —Mrs. Linden.

RANK.

Oh, indeed; I've often heard Mrs. Linden's name; I think I passed you on the stairs as I came up.

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes; I go so very slowly. Stairs try me so much.

RANK.

Ah—you are not very strong?

MRS. LINDEN.

Only overworked.

RANK.

Nothing more? Then no doubt you've come to town to find rest in a round of dissipation?

MRS. LINDEN.

I have come to look for employment.

RANK.

Is that an approved remedy for overwork?

MRS. LINDEN.

One must live, Doctor Rank.

RANK.

Yes, that seems to be the general opinion.

NORA.

Come, Doctor Rank—you want to live yourself.

RANK.

To be sure I do. However wretched I may be, I want to drag on as long as possible. All my patients, too, have the same mania. And it's the same with people whose complaint is moral. At this very moment Helmer is talking to just such a moral incurable——

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Softly.*] Ah!

NORA.

Whom do you mean?

RANK.

Oh, a fellow named Krogstad, a man you know nothing about—corrupt to the very core of his character. But even he began by announcing, as a matter of vast importance, that he must live.

NORA.

Indeed? And what did he want with Torvald?

RANK.

I haven't an idea; I only gathered that it was some bank business.

NORA.

I didn't know that Krog—that this Mr. Krogstad had anything to do with the Bank?

RANK.

Yes. He has got some sort of place there. [*To* MRS. LINDEN.] I don't know whether in your part of the country, you have people who go grubbing and sniffing around in search of moral rottenness—and then, when they have found a "case," don't rest till they have got their man into some good position, where they can keep a watch upon him. Men with a clean bill of health they leave out in the cold.

MRS. LINDEN.

Well, I suppose the—delicate characters require most care.

RANK.

[*Shrugs his shoulders.*] There we have it! It's that notion that makes society a hospital.

[NORA, *deep in her own thoughts, breaks into half-stifled laughter and claps her hands.*

RANK.

Why do you laugh at that? Have you any idea what "society" is?

NORA.

What do I care for your tiresome society? I was laughing at something else—something excessively amusing. Tell me, Doctor Rank, are all the employees at the Bank dependent on Torvald now?

RANK.

Is that what strikes you as excessively amusing?

NORA.

[*Smiles and hums.*] Never mind, never mind! [*Walks about the room.*] Yes, it is funny to think that we—that Torvald has such power over so many people. [*Takes the bag from her pocket.*] Doctor Rank, will you have a macaroon?

RANK.

What!—macaroons! I thought they were contraband here.

NORA.

Yes; but Christina brought me these.

MRS. LINDEN.

What! I——?

NORA.

Oh, well! Don't be frightened. You couldn't possibly know that Torvald had forbidden them. The fact is, he's afraid of me spoiling my teeth. But, oh bother, just for once!—That's for you, Doctor Rank! [*Puts a macaroon into his mouth.*] And you too, Christina. And I'll have one while we're about it—only a tiny one,

or at most two. [*Walks about again.*] Oh dear, I am happy! There's only one thing in the world I really want.

RANK.

Well; what's that?

NORA.

There's something I should so like to say—in Torvald's hearing.

RANK.

Then why don't you say it?

NORA.

Because I daren't, it's so ugly.

MRS. LINDEN.

Ugly!

RANK.

In that case you'd better not. But to us you might—— What is it you would so like to say in Helmer's hearing?

NORA.

I should so love to say "Damn it all!"[1]

RANK.

Are you out of your mind?

MRS. LINDEN.

Good gracious, Nora——!

[1] "Död og pine," literally "death and torture"; but by usage a comparatively mild oath.

RANK.

Say it—there he is!

NORA.

[*Hides the macaroons.*] Hush—sh—sh!

HELMER *comes out of his room, hat in hand, with his overcoat on his arm.*

NORA.

[*Going to him.*] Well, Torvald dear, have you got rid of him?

HELMER.

Yes; he has just gone.

NORA.

Let me introduce you—this is Christina, who has come to town——

HELMER.

Christina? Pardon me, I don't know——

NORA.

Mrs. Linden, Torvald dear—Christina Linden.

HELMER.

[*To* MRS. LINDEN.] Indeed! A school-friend of my wife's, no doubt?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes; we knew each other as girls.

NORA.

And only think! she has taken this long journey on purpose to speak to you.

HELMER.

To speak to me!

MRS. LINDEN.

Well, not quite——

NORA.

You see, Christina is tremendously clever at office-work, and she's so anxious to work under a first-rate man of business in order to learn still more——

HELMER.

[*To* MRS. LINDEN.] Very sensible indeed.

NORA.

And when she heard you were appointed manager—it was telegraphed, you know—she started off at once, and—— Torvald, dear, for my sake, you must do something for Christina. Now can't you?

HELMER.

It's not impossible. I presume Mrs. Linden is a widow?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes.

HELMER.

And you have already had some experience of business?

MRS. LINDEN.

A good deal.

HELMER.

Well, then, it's very likely I may be able to find a place for you.

NORA.

[*Clapping her hands.*] There now! There now!

HELMER.

You have come at a fortunate moment, Mrs. Linden.

MRS. LINDEN.

Oh, how can I thank you——?

HELMER.

[*Smiling.*] There is no occasion. [*Puts on his overcoat.*] But for the present you must excuse me——

RANK.

Wait; I am going with you.

[*Fetches his fur coat from the hall and warms it at the fire.*

NORA.

Don't be long, Torvald dear.

HELMER.

Only an hour; not more.

NORA.

Are you going too, Christina?

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Putting on her walking things.*] Yes; I must set about looking for lodgings.

HELMER.

Then perhaps we can go together?

NORA.

[*Helping her.*] What a pity we haven't a spare room for you; but it's impossible——

MRS. LINDEN.

I shouldn't think of troubling you. Good-bye, dear Nora, and thank you for all your kindness.

NORA.

Good-bye for the present. Of course you'll come back this evening. And you, too, Doctor Rank. What! If you're well enough? Of course you'll be well enough. Only wrap up warmly. [*They go out, talking, into the hall. Outside on the stairs are heard children's voices.*] There they are! There they are! [*She runs to the outer door and opens it. The nurse,* ANNA, *enters the hall with the children.*] Come in! Come in! [*Stoops down and kisses the children.*] Oh, my sweet darlings! Do you see them, Christina? Aren't they lovely?

RANK.

Don't let us stand here chattering in the draught.

HELMER.

Come, Mrs. Linden; only mothers can stand such a temperature.

[DR. RANK, HELMER, *and* MRS. LINDEN *go down the stairs;* ANNA *enters the room with the children;* NORA *also, shutting the door.*

NORA.

How fresh and bright you look! And what red cheeks you've got! Like apples and roses. [*The children chatter to her during what follows.*] Have you had great fun? That's splendid! Oh, really! You've been giving Emmy and Bob a ride on your sledge!—both at once, only think! Why, you're quite a man, Ivar. Oh, give her to me a little, Anna. My sweet little dolly! [*Takes the smallest from the nurse and dances with her.*] Yes, yes; mother will dance with Bob too. What! Did you have a game of snowballs? Oh, I wish I'd been there. No; leave them, Anna; I'll take their things off. Oh, yes, let me do it; it's such fun. Go to the nursery; you look frozen. You'll find some hot coffee on the stove.

[*The* NURSE *goes into the room on the left.* NORA *takes off the children's things and throws them down anywhere, while the children talk all together.*

Really! A big dog ran after you? But he didn't bite you? No; dogs don't bite dear little dolly children. Don't peep into those parcels, Ivar. What is it? Wouldn't you like to know? Take care—it'll bite! What? Shall we have a game? What shall we play at? Hide-and-seek? Yes, let's play hide-and-seek. Bob shall hide first. Am I to? Yes, let me hide first.

[*She and the children play, with laughter and shouting, in the room and the adjacent one to the right.*

At last NORA *hides under the table; the children come rushing in, look for her, but cannot find her, hear her half-choked laughter, rush to the table, lift up the cover and see her. Loud shouts. She creeps out, as though to frighten them. Fresh shouts. Meanwhile there has been a knock at the door leading into the hall. No one has heard it. Now the door is half opened and* KROGSTAD *appears. He waits a little; the game is renewed.*

KROGSTAD.

I beg your pardon, Mrs. Helmer——

NORA.

[*With a suppressed cry, turns round and half jumps up.*] Ah! What do you want?

KROGSTAD.

Excuse me; the outer door was ajar—somebody must have forgotten to shut it——

NORA.

[*Standing up.*] My husband is not at home, Mr. Krogstad.

KROGSTAD.

I know it.

NORA.

Then what do you want here?

KROGSTAD.

To say a few words to you.

NORA.

To me? [*To the children, softly.*] Go in to Anna. What? No, the strange man won't hurt mamma. When he's gone we'll go on playing. [*She leads the children into the left-hand room, and shuts the door behind them. Uneasy, in suspense.*] It is to me you wish to speak?

KROGSTAD.

Yes, to you.

NORA.

To-day? But it's not the first yet——

KROGSTAD.

No, to-day is Christmas Eve. It will depend upon yourself whether you have a merry Christmas.

NORA.

What do you want? I'm not ready to-day——

KROGSTAD.

Never mind that just now. I have come about another matter. You have a minute to spare?

NORA.

Oh, yes, I suppose so; although——

KROGSTAD.

Good. I was sitting in the restaurant opposite, and I saw your husband go down the street——

NORA.

Well?

KROGSTAD.

——with a lady.

NORA.

What then?

KROGSTAD.

May I ask if the lady was a Mrs. Linden?

NORA.

Yes.

KROGSTAD.

Who has just come to town?

NORA.

Yes. To-day.

KROGSTAD.

I believe she is an intimate friend of yours.

NORA.

Certainly. But I don't understand——

KROGSTAD.

I used to know her too.

NORA.

I know you did.

KROGSTAD.

Ah! You know all about it. I thought as much. Now, frankly, is Mrs. Linden to have a place in the Bank?

NORA.

How dare you catechise me in this way, Mr. Krogstad—you, a subordinate of my husband's? But since you ask, you shall know. Yes, Mrs. Linden is to be employed. And it is I who recommended her, Mr. Krogstad. Now you know.

KROGSTAD.

Then my guess was right.

NORA.

[*Walking up and down.*] You see one has a wee bit of influence, after all. It doesn't follow because one's only a woman—— When people are in a subordinate position, Mr. Krogstad, they ought really to be careful how they offend anybody who—h'm——

KROGSTAD.

——who has influence?

NORA.

Exactly.

KROGSTAD.

[*Taking another tone.*] Mrs. Helmer, will you have the kindness to employ your influence on my behalf?

NORA.

What? How do you mean?

KROGSTAD.

Will you be so good as to see that I retain my subordinate position in the Bank?

NORA.

What do you mean? Who wants to take it from you?

KROGSTAD.

Oh, you needn't pretend ignorance. I can very well understand that it cannot be pleasant for your friend to meet me; and I can also understand now for whose sake I am to be hounded out.

NORA.

But I assure you——

KROGSTAD.

Come come now, once for all: there is time yet, and I advise you to use your influence to prevent it.

NORA.

But, Mr. Krogstad, I have no influence—absolutely none.

KROGSTAD.

None? I thought you said a moment ago——

NORA.

Of course not in that sense. I! How can you imagine that I should have any such influence over my husband?

KROGSTAD.

Oh, I know your husband from our college days. I don't think he is any more inflexible than other husbands.

NORA.

If you talk disrespectfully of my husband, I must request you to leave the house.

KROGSTAD.

You are bold, madam.

NORA.

I am afraid of you no longer. When New Year's Day is over, I shall soon be out of the whole business.

KROGSTAD.

[*Controlling himself.*] Listen to me, Mrs. Helmer. If need be, I shall fight as though for my life to keep my little place in the Bank.

NORA.

Yes, so it seems.

KROGSTAD.

It's not only for the salary: that is what I care least about. It's something else—— Well, I had better make a clean breast of it. Of course you know, like every one else, that some years ago I—got into trouble.

NORA.

I think I've heard something of the sort.

KROGSTAD.

The matter never came into court; but from that moment all paths were barred to me. Then I took up the business you know about. I had to turn my hand

to something; and I don't think I've been one of the worst. But now I must get clear of it all. My sons are growing up; for their sake I must try to recover my character as well as I can. This place in the Bank was the first step; and now your husband wants to kick me off the ladder, back into the mire.

NORA.

But I assure you, Mr. Krogstad, I haven't the least power to help you.

KROGSTAD.

That is because you have not the will; but I can compel you.

NORA.

You won't tell my husband that I owe you money?

KROGSTAD.

H'm; suppose I were to?

NORA.

It would be shameful of you. [*With tears in her voice.*] The secret that is my joy and my pride—that he should learn it in such an ugly, coarse way—and from you. It would involve me in all sorts of unpleasantness—

KROGSTAD.

Only unpleasantness?

NORA.

[*Hotly.*] But just do it. It's you that will come off worst, for then my husband will see what a bad man you are, and then you certainly won't keep your place.

KROGSTAD.

I asked whether it was only domestic unpleasantness you feared?

NORA.

If my husband gets to know about it, he will of course pay you off at once, and then we shall have nothing more to do with you.

KROGSTAD.

[*Coming a pace nearer.*] Listen, Mrs. Helmer: either your memory is defective, or you don't know much about business. I must make the position a little clearer to you.

NORA.

How so?

KROGSTAD.

When your husband was ill, you came to me to borrow twelve hundred dollars.

NORA.

I knew of nobody else.

KROGSTAD.

I promised to find you the money——

NORA.

And you did find it.

KROGSTAD.

I promised to find you the money, on certain conditions. You were so much taken up at the time about

your husband's illness, and so eager to have the wherewithal for your journey, that you probably did not give much thought to the details. Allow me to remind you of them. I promised to find you the amount in exchange for a note of hand, which I drew up.

NORA.

Yes, and I signed it.

KROGSTAD.

Quite right. But then I added a few lines, making your father security for the debt. Your father was to sign this.

NORA.

Was to——? He did sign it!

KROGSTAD.

I had left the date blank. That is to say, your father was himself to date his signature. Do you recollect that?

NORA.

Yes, I believe——

KROGSTAD.

Then I gave you the paper to send to your father, by post. Is not that so?

NORA.

Yes.

KROGSTAD.

And of course you did so at once; for within five or six days you brought me back the document with your father's signature; and I handed you the money.

NORA.

Well? Have I not made my payments punctually?

KROGSTAD.

Fairly—yes. But to return to the point: You were in great trouble at the time, Mrs. Helmer.

NORA.

I was indeed!

KROGSTAD.

Your father was very ill, I believe?

NORA.

He was on his death-bed.

KROGSTAD.

And died soon after?

NORA.

Yes.

KROGSTAD.

Tell me, Mrs. Helmer: do you happen to recollect the day of his death? The day of the month, I mean?

NORA.

Father died on the 29th of September.

KROGSTAD.

Quite correct. I have made inquiries. And here comes in the remarkable point—[*Produces a paper.*] which I cannot explain.

NORA.

What remarkable point? I don't know——

KROGSTAD.

The remarkable point, madam, that your father signed this paper three days after his death!

NORA.

What! I don't understand——

KROGSTAD.

Your father died on the 29th of September. But look here: he has dated his signature October 2nd! Is not that remarkable, Mrs. Helmer? [NORA *is silent.*] Can you explain it? [NORA *continues silent.*] It is noteworthy, too, that the words "October 2nd" and the year are not in your father's handwriting, but in one which I believe I know. Well, this may be explained; your father may have forgotten to date his signature, and somebody may have added the date at random, before the fact of your father's death was known. There is nothing wrong in that. Everything depends on the signature. Of course it is genuine, Mrs. Helmer? It was really your father himself who wrote his name here?

NORA.

[*After a short silence, throws her head back and looks defiantly at him.*] No, it was not. *I* wrote father's name.

KROGSTAD.

Ah!—Are you aware, madam, that that is a dangerous admission?

NORA.

How so? You will soon get your money.

KROGSTAD.

May I ask you one more question? Why did you not send the paper to your father?

NORA.

It was impossible. Father was ill. If I had asked him for his signature, I should have had to tell him why I wanted the money; but he was so ill I really could not tell him that my husband's life was in danger. It was impossible.

KROGSTAD.

Then it would have been better to have given up your tour.

NORA.

No, I couldn't do that; my husband's life depended on that journey. I couldn't give it up.

KROGSTAD.

And did it never occur to you that you were playing me false?

NORA.

That was nothing to me. I didn't care in the least about you. I couldn't endure you for all the cruel difficulties you made, although you knew how ill my husband was.

KROGSTAD.

Mrs. Helmer, you evidently do not realise what you have been guilty of. But I can assure you it was nothing more and nothing worse that made me an outcast from society.

NORA.

You! You want me to believe that you did a brave thing to save your wife's life?

KROGSTAD.

The law takes no account of motives.

NORA.

Then it must be a very bad law.

KROGSTAD.

Bad or not, if I produce this document in court, you will be condemned according to law.

NORA.

I don't believe that. Do you mean to tell me that a daughter has no right to spare her dying father trouble and anxiety?—that a wife has no right to save her husband's life? I don't know much about the law, but I'm sure you'll find, somewhere or another, that that is allowed. And you don't know that—you, a lawyer! You must be a bad one, Mr. Krogstad.

KROGSTAD.

Possibly. But business—such business as ours—I do understand. You believe that? Very well; now do as

you please. But this I may tell you, that if I am flung into the gutter a second time, you shall keep me company. [*Bows and goes out through hall.*

NORA.

[*Stands a while thinking, then tosses her head.*] Oh nonsense! He wants to frighten me. I'm not so foolish as that. [*Begins folding the children's clothes. Pauses.*] But——? No, it's impossible! Why, I did it for love!

CHILDREN.

[*At the door, left.*] Mamma, the strange man has gone now.

NORA.

Yes, yes, I know. But don't tell any one about the strange man. Do you hear? Not even papa!

CHILDREN.

No, mamma; and now will you play with us again?

NORA.

No, no; not now.

CHILDREN.

Oh, do, mamma; you know you promised.

NORA.

Yes, but I can't just now. Run to the nursery; I have so much to do. Run along, run along, and be good, my darlings! [*She pushes them gently into the inner room, and closes the door behind them. Sits on the sofa, embroiders a few stitches, but soon pauses.*] No! [*Throws*

down the work, rises, goes to the hall door and calls out.] Ellen, bring in the Christmas-tree! [*Goes to table, left, and opens the drawer; again pauses.*] No, it's quite impossible!

ELLEN.

[*With Christmas-tree.*] Where shall I stand it, ma'am?

NORA.

There, in the middle of the room.

ELLEN.

Shall I bring in anything else?

NORA.

No, thank you, I have all I want.

[ELLEN, *having put down the tree, goes out.*

NORA.

[*Busy dressing the tree.*] There must be a candle here —and flowers there.—That horrible man! Nonsense, nonsense! there's nothing to be afraid of. The Christmas-tree shall be beautiful. I'll do everything to please you, Torvald; I'll sing and dance, and——

Enter HELMER *by the hall door, with a bundle of documents.*

NORA.

Oh! You're back already?

HELMER.

Yes. Has anybody been here?

NORA.

Here? No.

HELMER.

That's odd. I saw Krogstad come out of the house.

NORA.

Did you? Oh, yes, by-the-bye, he was here for a minute.

HELMER.

Nora, I can see by your manner that he has been begging you to put in a good word for him.

NORA.

Yes.

HELMER.

And you were to do it as if of your own accord? You were to say nothing to me of his having been here. Didn't he suggest that too?

NORA.

Yes, Torvald; but——

HELMER.

Nora, Nora! And you could condescend to that! To speak to such a man, to make him a promise! And then to tell me an untruth about it!

NORA.

An untruth!

HELMER.

Didn't you say that nobody had been here? [*Threatens with his finger.*] My little bird must never do that again! A song-bird must sing clear and true; no false notes. [*Puts his arm round her.*] That's so, isn't it? Yes, I was sure of it. [*Lets her go.*] And now we'll say no more about it. [*Sits down before the fire.*] Oh, how cosy and quiet it is here! [*Glances into his documents.*

NORA.

[*Busy with the tree, after a short silence.*] Torvald!

HELMER.

Yes.

NORA.

I'm looking forward so much to the Stenborgs' fancy ball the day after to-morrow.

HELMER.

And I'm on tenterhooks to see what surprise you have in store for me.

NORA.

Oh, it's too tiresome!

HELMER.

What is?

NORA.

I can't think of anything good. Everything seems so foolish and meaningless.

HELMER.

Has little Nora made that discovery?

NORA.

[*Behind his chair, with her arms on the back.*] Are you very busy, Torvald?

HELMER.

Well——

NORA.

What papers are those?

HELMER.

Bank business.

NORA.

Already!

HELMER.

I have got the retiring manager to let me make some necessary changes in the staff and the organization. I can do this during Christmas week. I want to have everything straight by the New Year.

NORA.

Then that's why that poor Krogstad——

HELMER.

H'm.

NORA.

[*Still leaning over the chair-back and slowly stroking his hair.*] If you hadn't been so very busy, I should have asked you a great, great favour, Torvald.

HELMER.

What can it be? Out with it.

NORA.

Nobody has such perfect taste as you; and I should so love to look well at the fancy ball. Torvald, dear, couldn't you take me in hand, and settle what I'm to be, and arrange my costume for me?

HELMER.

Aha! So my wilful little woman is at a loss, and making signals of distress.

NORA.

Yes, please, Torvald. I can't get on without your help.

HELMER.

Well, well, I'll think it over, and we'll soon hit upon something.

NORA.

Oh, how good that is of you! [*Goes to the tree again; pause.*] How well the red flowers show.—Tell me, was it anything so very dreadful this Krogstad got into trouble about?

HELMER.

Forgery, that's all. Don't you know what that means?

NORA.

Mayn't he have been driven to it by need?

HELMER.

Yes; or, like so many others, he may have done it in pure heedlessness. I am not so hard-hearted as to condemn a man absolutely for a single fault.

NORA.

No, surely not, Torvald!

HELMER.

Many a man can retrieve his character, if he owns his crime and takes the punishment.

NORA.

Punishment——?

HELMER.

But Krogstad didn't do that. He evaded the law by means of tricks and subterfuges; and that is what has morally ruined him.

NORA.

Do you think that——?

HELMER.

Just think how a man with a thing of that sort on his conscience must be always lying and canting and shamming. Think of the mask he must wear even towards those who stand nearest him—towards his own wife and children. The effect on the children—that's the most terrible part of it, Nora.

NORA.

Why?

HELMER.

Because in such an atmosphere of lies home life is poisoned and contaminated in every fibre. Every breath the children draw contains some germ of evil.

NORA.

[*Closer behind him.*] Are you sure of that?

HELMER.

As a lawyer, my dear, I have seen it often enough. Nearly all cases of early corruption may be traced to lying mothers.

NORA.

Why—mothers?

HELMER.

It generally comes from the mother's side; but of course the father's influence may act in the same way. Every lawyer knows it too well. And here has this Krogstad been poisoning his own children for years past by a life of lies and hypocrisy—that is why I call him morally ruined. [*Holds out both hands to her.*] So my sweet little Nora must promise not to plead his cause. Shake hands upon it. Come, come, what's this? Give me your hand. That's right. Then it's a bargain. I assure you it would have been impossible for me to work with him. It gives me a positive sense of physical discomfort to come in contact with such people.

[NORA *draws her hand away, and moves to the other side of the Christmas-tree.*

NORA.

How warm it is here. And I have so much to do.

HELMER.

[*Rises and gathers up his papers.*] Yes, and I must try to get some of these papers looked through before dinner. And I shall think over your costume too. Perhaps I may even find something to hang in gilt paper on the Christmas-tree. [*Lays his hand on her head.*] My precious little song-bird!

[*He goes into his room and shuts the door.*

NORA.

[*Softly, after a pause.*] It can't be. It's impossible. It must be impossible!

ANNA.

[*At the door, left.*] The little ones are begging so prettily to come to mamma.

NORA.

No, no, no; don't let them come to me! Keep them with you, Anna.

ANNA.

Very well, ma'am. [*Shuts the door.*

NORA.

[*Pale with terror.*] Corrupt my children!—Poison my home! [*Short pause. She throws back her head.*] It's not true! It can never, never be true!

ACT SECOND

The same room. In the corner, beside the piano, stands the Christmas-tree, stripped, and with the candles burnt out. NORA'S *outdoor things lie on the sofa.*

NORA, *alone, is walking about restlessly. At last she stops by the sofa, and takes up her cloak.*

NORA.

[*Dropping the cloak.*] There's somebody coming! [*Goes to the hall door and listens.*] Nobody; of course nobody will come to-day, Christmas-day; nor to-morrow either. But perhaps——[*Opens the door and looks out.*]—No, nothing in the letter box; quite empty. [*Comes forward.*] Stuff and nonsense! Of course he won't really do anything. Such a thing couldn't happen. It's impossible! Why, I have three little children.

ANNA *enters from the left, with a large cardboard box.*

ANNA.

I've found the box with the fancy dress at last.

NORA.

Thanks; put it down on the table.

ANNA.

[*Does so.*] But I'm afraid it's very much out of order.

NORA.

Oh, I wish I could tear it into a hundred thousand pieces!

ANNA.

Oh, no. It can easily be put to rights—just a little patience.

NORA.

I shall go and get Mrs. Linden to help me.

ANNA.

Going out again? In such weather as this! You'll catch cold, ma'am, and be ill.

NORA.

Worse things might happen.—What are the children doing?

ANNA.

They're playing with their Christmas presents, poor little dears; but——

NORA.

Do they often ask for me?

ANNA.

You see they've been so used to having their mamma with them.

NORA.

Yes; but, Anna, I can't have them so much with me in future.

ANNA.

Well, little children get used to anything.

NORA.

Do you think they do? Do you believe they would forget their mother if she went quite away?

ANNA.

Gracious me! Quite away?

NORA.

Tell me, Anna—I've so often wondered about it—how could you bring yourself to give your child up to strangers?

ANNA.

I had to when I came to nurse my little Miss Nora.

NORA.

But how could you make up your mind to it?

ANNA.

When I had the chance of such a good place? A poor girl who's been in trouble must take what comes. That wicked man did nothing for me.

NORA.

But your daughter must have forgotten you.

ANNA.

Oh, no, ma'am, that she hasn't. She wrote to me both when she was confirmed and when she was married.

NORA.

[*Embracing her.*] Dear old Anna—you were a good mother to me when I was little.

ANNA.

My poor little Nora had no mother but me.

NORA.

And if my little ones had nobody else, I'm sure you would—— Nonsense, nonsense! [*Opens the box.*] Go in to the children. Now I must—— You'll see how lovely I shall be to-morrow.

ANNA.

I'm sure there will be no one at the ball so lovely as my Miss Nora. [*She goes into the room on the left.*

NORA.

[*Takes the costume out of the box, but soon throws it down again.*] Oh, if I dared go out. If only nobody would come. If only nothing would happen here in the meantime. Rubbish; nobody is coming. Only not to think. What a delicious muff! Beautiful gloves, beautiful gloves! To forget—to forget! One, two, three, four, five, six—— [*With a scream.*] Ah, there they come. [*Goes towards the door, then stands irresolute.*

MRS. LINDEN *enters from the hall, where she has taken off her things.*

NORA.

Oh, it's you, Christina. There's nobody else there? I'm so glad you have come.

MRS. LINDEN.

I hear you called at my lodgings.

NORA.

Yes, I was just passing. There's something you m u s t help me with. Let us sit here on the sofa—so. To-morrow evening there's to be a fancy ball at Consul Stenborg's overhead, and Torvald wants me to appear as a Neapolitan fisher-girl, and dance the tarantella; I learned it at Capri.

MRS. LINDEN.

I see—quite a performance.

NORA.

Yes, Torvald wishes it. Look, this is the costume; Torvald had it made for me in Italy. But now it's all so torn, I don't know——

MRS. LINDEN.

Oh, we shall soon set that to rights. It's only the trimming that has come loose here and there. Have you a needle and thread? Ah, here's the very thing.

NORA.

Oh, how kind of you.

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Sewing.*] So you're to be in costume to-morrow, Nora? I'll tell you what—I shall come in for a moment to see you in all your glory. But I've quite forgotten to thank you for the pleasant evening yesterday.

NORA.

[*Rises and walks across the room.*] Oh, yesterday, it didn't seem so pleasant as usual.—You should have come to town a little sooner, Christina.—Torvald has certainly the art of making home bright and beautiful.

MRS. LINDEN.

You too, I should think, or you wouldn't be your father's daughter. But tell me—is Doctor Rank always so depressed as he was last evening?

NORA.

No, yesterday it was particularly noticeable. You see, he suffers from a dreadful illness. He has spinal consumption, poor fellow. They say his father was a horrible man, who kept mistresses and all sorts of things—so the son has been sickly from his childhood, you understand.

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Lets her sewing fall into her lap.*] Why, my darling Nora, how do you come to know such things?

NORA.

[*Moving about the room.*] Oh, when one has three children, one sometimes has visits from women who are half—half doctors—and they talk of one thing and another.

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Goes on sewing; a short pause.*] Does Doctor Rank come here every day?

NORA.

Every day of his life. He has been Torvald's most intimate friend from boyhood, and he's a good friend of mine too. Doctor Rank is quite one of the family.

MRS. LINDEN.

But tell me—is he quite sincere? I mean, isn't he rather given to flattering people?

NORA.

No, quite the contrary. Why should you think so?

MRS. LINDEN.

When you introduced us yesterday he said he had often heard my name; but I noticed afterwards that your husband had no notion who I was. How could Doctor Rank——?

NORA.

He was quite right, Christina. You see, Torvald loves me so indescribably, he wants to have me all to himself, as he says. When we were first married he was almost jealous if I even mentioned any of my old friends at home; so naturally I gave up doing it. But I often talk of the old times to Doctor Rank, for he likes to hear about them.

MRS. LINDEN.

Listen to me, Nora! You are still a child in many ways. I am older than you, and have had more experience. I'll tell you something? You ought to get clear of all this with Dr. Rank.

NORA.

Get clear of what?

MRS. LINDEN.

The whole affair, I should say. You were talking yesterday of a rich admirer who was to find you money——

NORA.

Yes, one who never existed, worse luck. What then?

MRS. LINDEN.

Has Doctor Rank money?

NORA.

Yes, he has.

MRS. LINDEN.

And nobody to provide for?

NORA.

Nobody. But——?

MRS. LINDEN.

And he comes here every day?

NORA.

Yes, I told you so.

MRS. LINDEN.

I should have thought he would have had better taste.

NORA.

I don't understand you a bit.

MRS. LINDEN.

Don't pretend, Nora. Do you suppose I can't guess who lent you the twelve hundred dollars?

NORA.

Are you out of your senses? How can you think such a thing? A friend who comes here every day! Why, the position would be unbearable!

MRS. LINDEN.

Then it really is not he?

NORA.

No, I assure you. It never for a moment occurred to me—— Besides, at that time he had nothing to lend; he came into his property afterwards.

MRS. LINDEN.

Well, I believe that was lucky for you, Nora dear.

NORA.

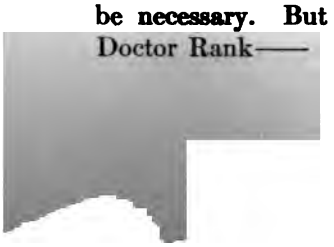
No, really, it would never have struck me to ask Dr. Rank—— And yet, I'm certain that if I did——

MRS. LINDEN.

But of course you never would.

NORA.

Of course not. It's inconceivable that it should ever be necessary. But I'm quite sure that if I spoke to



MRS. LINDEN.

Behind your husband's back?

NORA.

I must get clear of the other thing; that's behind his back too. I must get clear of that.

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes, yes, I told you so yesterday; but——

NORA.

[*Walking up and down.*] A man can manage these things much better than a woman.

MRS. LINDEN.

One's own husband, yes.

NORA.

Nonsense. [*Stands still.*] When everything is paid, one gets back the paper.

MRS. LINDEN.

Of course.

NORA.

And can tear it into a hundred thousand pieces, and burn it up, the nasty, filthy thing!

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Looks at her fixedly, lays down her work, and rises slowly.*] Nora, you are hiding something from me.

NORA.

Can you see it in my face?

MRS. LINDEN.

Something has happened since yesterday morning. Nora, what is it?

NORA.

[*Going towards her.*] Christina——! [*Listens.*] Hush! There's Torvald coming home. Do you mind going into the nursery for the present? Torvald can't bear to see dressmaking going on. Get Anna to help you.

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Gathers some of the things together.*] Very well; but I shan't go away until you have told me all about it.

[*She goes out to the left, as* HELMER *enters from the hall.*

NORA.

[*Runs to meet him.*] Oh, how I've been longing for you to come, Torvald dear!

HELMER.

Was that the dressmaker——?

NORA.

No, Christina. She's helping me with my costume. You'll see how nice I shall look.

HELMER.

Yes, wasn't that a happy thought of mine?

NORA.

Splendid! But isn't it good of me, too, to have given in to you about the tarantella?

HELMER.

[*Takes her under the chin.*] Good of you! To give in to your own husband? Well well, you little madcap, I know you don't mean it. But I won't disturb you. I daresay you want to be "trying on."

NORA.

And you are going to work, I suppose?

HELMER.

Yes. [*Shows her a bundle of papers.*] Look here. I've just come from the Bank——

[*Goes towards his room.*

NORA.

Torvald.

HELMER.

[*Stopping.*] Yes?

NORA.

If your little squirrel were to beg you for something so prettily——

HELMER.

Well?

NORA.

Would you do it?

HELMER.

I must know first what it is.

NORA.

The squirrel would skip about and play all sorts of tricks if you would only be nice and kind.

HELMER.

Come, then, out with it.

NORA.

Your lark would twitter from morning till night——

HELMER.

Oh, that she does in any case.

NORA.

I'll be an elf and dance in the moonlight for you, Torvald.

HELMER.

Nora—you can't mean what you were hinting at this morning?

NORA.

[*Coming nearer.*] Yes, Torvald, I beg and implore you!

HELMER.

Have you really the courage to begin that again?

NORA.

Yes, yes; for my sake, you m u s t let Krogstad keep his place in the Bank.

HELMER.

My dear Nora, it's his place I intend for Mrs. Linden.

NORA.

Yes, that's so good of you. But instead of Krogstad, you could dismiss some other clerk.

HELMER.

Why, this is incredible obstinacy! Because you have thoughtlessly promised to put in a word for him, I am to——!

NORA.

It's not that, Torvald. It's for your own sake. This man writes for the most scurrilous newspapers; you said so yourself. He can do you no end of harm. I'm so terribly afraid of him——

HELMER.

Ah, I understand; it's old recollections that are frightening you.

NORA.

What do you mean?

HELMER.

Of course you're thinking of your father.

NORA.

Yes—yes, of course. Only think of the shameful slanders wicked people used to write about father. I believe they would have got him dismissed if you hadn't been sent to look into the thing, and been kind to him, and helped him.

HELMER.

My little Nora, between your father and me there is all the difference in the world. Your father was not altogether unimpeachable. I am; and I hope to remain so.

NORA.

Oh, no one knows what wicked men may hit upon. We could live so quietly and happily now, in our cosy, peaceful home, you and I and the children, Torvald! That's why I beg and implore you——

HELMER.

And it is just by pleading his cause that you make it impossible for me to keep him. It's already known at the Bank that I intend to dismiss Krogstad. If it were now reported that the new manager let himself be turned round his wife's little finger——

NORA.

What then?

HELMER.

Oh, nothing, so long as a wilful woman can have her way——! I am to make myself a laughing-stock to the whole staff, and set people saying that I am open

to all sorts of outside influence? Take my word for it, I should soon feel the consequences. And besides—there is one thing that makes Krogstad impossible for me to work with——

NORA.

What thing?

HELMER.

I could perhaps have overlooked his moral failings at a pinch——

NORA.

Yes, couldn't you, Torvald?

HELMER.

And I hear he is good at his work. But the fact is, he was a college chum of mine—there was one of those rash friendships between us that one so often repents of later. I may as well confess it at once—he calls me by my Christian name;[1] and he is tactless enough to do it even when others are present. He delights in putting on airs of familiarity—Torvald here, Torvald there! I assure you it's most painful to me. He would make my position at the Bank perfectly unendurable.

NORA.

Torvald, surely you're not serious?

HELMER.

No? Why not?

NORA.

That's such a petty reason.

[1] In the original, "We say 'thou' to each other."

HELMER.

What! Petty! Do you consider me petty!

NORA.

No, on the contrary, Torvald dear; and that's just why——

HELMER.

Never mind; you call my motives petty; then I must be petty too. Petty! Very well!—Now we'll put an end to this, once for all. [*Goes to the door into the hall and calls.*] Ellen!

NORA.

What do you want?

HELMER.

[*Searching among his papers.*] To settle the thing. [ELLEN *enters.*] Here; take this letter; give it to a messenger. See that he takes it at once. The address is on it. Here's the money.

ELLEN.

Very well, sir. [*Goes with the letter.*

HELMER.

[*Putting his papers together.*] There, Madam Obstinacy.

NORA.

[*Breathless.*] Torvald—what was in the letter?

HELMER.

Krogstad's dismissal.

NORA.

Call it back again, Torvald! There's still time. Oh, Torvald, call it back again! For my sake, for your own, for the children's sake! Do you hear, Torvald? Do it! You don't know what that letter may bring upon us all.

HELMER.

Too late.

NORA.

Yes, too late.

HELMER.

My dear Nora, I forgive your anxiety, though it's anything but flattering to me. Why should you suppose that *I* would be afraid of a wretched scribbler's spite? But I forgive you all the same, for it's a proof of your great love for me. [*Takes her in his arms.*] That's as it should be, my own dear Nora. Let what will happen—when it comes to the pinch, I shall have strength and courage enough. You shall see: my shoulders are broad enough to bear the whole burden.

NORA.

[*Terror-struck.*] What do you mean by that?

HELMER.

The whole burden, I say——

NORA.

[*With decision.*] That you shall never, never do!

HELMER.

Very well; then we'll share it, Nora, as man and wife. That is how it should be. [*Petting her.*] Are you satisfied now? Come, come, come, don't look like a scared dove. It's all nothing—foolish fancies.—Now you ought to play the tarantella through and practise with the tambourine. I shall sit in my inner room and shut both doors, so that I shall hear nothing. You can make as much noise as you please. [*Turns round in doorway.*] And when Rank comes, just tell him where I'm to be found.

[*He nods to her, and goes with his papers into his room, closing the door.*

NORA.

[*Bewildered with terror, stands as though rooted to the ground, and whispers.*] He would do it. Yes, he would do it. He would do it, in spite of all the world.—No, never that, never, never! Anything rather than that! Oh, for some way of escape! What shall I do——! [*Hall bell rings.*] Doctor Rank——!—Anything, anything, rather than——!

[NORA *draws her hands over her face, pulls herself together, goes to the door and opens it.* RANK *stands outside hanging up his fur coat. During what follows it begins to grow dark.*

NORA.

Good afternoon, Doctor Rank, I knew you by your ring. But you mustn't go to Torvald now. I believe he's busy.

RANK.

And you? [*Enters and closes the door.*

NORA.

Oh, you know very well, I have always time for y o u .

RANK.

Thank you. I shall avail myself of your kindness as long as I can.

NORA.

What do you mean? As long as you can?

RANK.

Yes. Does t h a t frighten you?

NORA.

I think it's an odd expression. Do you expect anything to happen?

RANK.

Something I have long been prepared for; but I didn't think it would come so soon.

NORA.

[*Catching at his arm.*] What have you discovered? Doctor Rank, you must tell me!

RANK.

[*Sitting down by the stove.*] I am running down hill. There's no help for it.

NORA.

[*Draws a long breath of relief.*] It's y o u——?

RANK.

Who else should it be?—Why lie to one's self? I am the most wretched of all my patients, Mrs. Helmer. In these last days I have been auditing my life-account—bankrupt! Perhaps before a month is over, I shall lie rotting in the church-yard.

NORA.

Oh! What an ugly way to talk.

RANK.

The thing itself is so confoundedly ugly, you see. But the worst of it is, so many other ugly things have to be gone through first. There is only one last investigation to be made, and when that is over I shall know pretty certainly when the break-up will begin. There's one thing I want to say to you: Helmer's delicate nature shrinks so from all that is horrible: I will not have him in my sick-room——

NORA.

But, Doctor Rank——

RANK.

I won't have him, I say—not on any account! I shall lock my door against him.—As soon as I am quite certain of the worst, I shall send you my visiting-card with a black cross on it; and then you will know that the final horror has begun.

NORA.

Why, you're perfectly unreasonable to-day; and I did so want you to be in a really good humour.

RANK.

With death staring me in the face?—And to suffer thus for another's sin! Where's the justice of it? And in one way or another you can trace in every family some such inexorable retribution——

NORA.

[*Stopping her ears.*] Nonsense, nonsense! Now cheer up!

RANK.

Well, after all, the whole thing's only worth laughing at. My poor innocent spine must do penance for my father's wild oats.

NORA.

[*At table, left.*] I suppose he was too fond of asparagus and Strasbourg pâté, wasn't he?

RANK.

Yes; and truffles.

NORA.

Yes, truffles, to be sure. And oysters, I believe?

RANK.

Yes, oysters; oysters, of course.

NORA.

And then all the port and champagne! It's sad that all these good things should attack the spine.

RANK.

Especially when the luckless spine attacked never had any good of them.

NORA.

Ah, yes, that's the worst of it.

RANK.

[*Looks at her searchingly.*] H'm——

NORA.

[*A moment later.*] Why did you smile?

RANK.

No; it was you that laughed.

NORA.

No; it was you that smiled, Doctor Rank.

RANK.

[*Standing up.*] I see you're deeper than I thought.

NORA.

I'm in such a crazy mood to-day.

RANK.

So it seems.

NORA.

[*With her hands on his shoulders.*] Dear, dear Doctor Rank, death shall not take you away from Torvald and me.

RANK.

Oh, you'll easily get over the loss. The absent are soon forgotten.

NORA.

[*Looks at him anxiously.*] Do you think so?

RANK.

People make fresh ties, and then——

NORA.

Who make fresh ties?

RANK.

You and Helmer will, when I am gone. You yourself are taking time by the forelock, it seems to me. What was that Mrs. Linden doing here yesterday?

NORA.

Oh!—you're surely not jealous of poor Christina?

RANK.

Yes, I am. She will be my successor in this house. When I am out of the way, this woman will perhaps——

NORA.

Hush! Not so loud! She's in there.

RANK.

To-day as well? You see!

NORA.

Only to put my costume in order—dear me, how unreasonable you are! [*Sits on sofa.*] Now do be good, Doctor Rank! To-morrow you shall see how beautifully I shall dance; and then you may fancy that I'm doing it all to please you—and of course Torvald as well. [*Takes various things out of box.*] Doctor Rank, sit down here, and I'll show you something.

RANK.

[*Sitting.*] What is it?

NORA.

Look here. Look!

RANK.

Silk stockings.

NORA.

Flesh-coloured. Aren't they lovely? It's so dark here now; but to-morrow—— No, no, no; you must only look at the feet. Oh, well, I suppose you may look at the rest too.

RANK.

H'm——

NORA.

What are you looking so critical about? Do you think they won't fit me?

RANK.

I can't possibly give any competent opinion on that point.

NORA.

[*Looking at him a moment.*] For shame! [*Hits him lightly on the ear with the stockings.*] Take that.

[*Rolls them up again.*

RANK.

And what other wonders am I to see?

NORA.

You sha'n't see anything more; for you don't behave nicely. [*She hums a little and searches among the things.*

RANK.

[*After a short silence.*] When I sit here gossiping with you, I can't imagine—I simply cannot conceive—what would have become of me if I had never entered this house.

NORA.

[*Smiling.*] Yes, I think you do feel at home with us.

RANK.

[*More softly—looking straight before him.*] And now to have to leave it all——

NORA.

Nonsense. You sha'n't leave us.

RANK.

[*In the same tone.*] And not to be able to leave behind the slightest token of gratitude; scarcely even a passing regret—nothing but an empty place, that can be filled by the first comer.

NORA.

And if I were to ask you for——? No——

RANK.

For what?

NORA.

For a great proof of your friendship.

RANK.

Yes—yes?

NORA.

I mean—for a very, very great service——

RANK.

Would you really, for once, make me so happy?

NORA.

Oh, you don't know what it is.

RANK.

Then tell me.

NORA.

No, I really can't, Doctor Rank. It's far, far too much —not only a service, but help and advice besides——

RANK.

So much the better. I can't think what you can mean. But go on. Don't you trust me?

NORA.

As I trust no one else. I know you are my best and truest friend. So I will tell you. Well then, Doctor Rank, there is something you must help me to prevent. You know how deeply, how wonderfully Torvald loves me; he wouldn't hesitate a moment to give his very life for my sake.

RANK.

[*Bending towards her.*] Nora—do you think he is the only one who——?

NORA.

[*With a slight start.*] Who——?

RANK.

Who would gladly give his life for you?

NORA.

[*Sadly.*] Oh!

RANK.

I have sworn that you shall know it before I—go. I shall never find a better opportunity.—Yes, Nora, now I have told you; and now you know that you can trust me as you can no one else.

NORA.

[*Standing up; simply and calmly.*] Let me pass, please.

RANK.

[*Makes way for her, but remains sitting.*] Nora——

NORA.

[*In the doorway.*] Ellen, bring the lamp. [*Crosses to the stove.*] Oh dear, Doctor Rank, that was too bad of you.

RANK.

[*Rising.*] That I have loved you as deeply as—any one else? Was that too bad of me?

NORA.

No, but that you should have told me so. It was so unnecessary——

RANK.

What do you mean? Did you know——?

[ELLEN *enters with the lamp; sets it on the table and goes out again.*

RANK.

Nora—Mrs. Helmer—I ask you, did you know?

NORA.

Oh, how can I tell what I knew or didn't know? I really can't say—— How could you be so clumsy, Doctor Rank? It was all so nice!

RANK.

Well, at any rate, you know now that I am at your service, body and soul. And now, go on.

NORA.

[*Looking at him.*] Go on—now?

RANK.

I beg you to tell me what you want.

NORA.

I can tell you nothing now.

RANK.

Yes, yes! You mustn't punish me in that way. Let me do for you whatever a man can.

NORA.

You can do nothing for me now.—Besides, I really want no help. You shall see it was only my fancy. Yes, it must be so. Of course! [*Sits in the rocking-chair, looks at him and smiles.*] You are a nice person, Doctor Rank! Aren't you ashamed of yourself, now that the lamp is on the table?

RANK.

No; not exactly. But perhaps I ought to go—for ever.

NORA.

No, indeed you mustn't. Of course you must come and go as you've always done. You know very well that Torvald can't do without you.

RANK.

Yes, but you?

NORA.

Oh, you know I always like to have you here.

RANK.

That is just what led me astray. You are a riddle to me. It has often seemed to me as if you liked being with me almost as much as being with Helmer.

NORA.

Yes; don't you see? There are people one loves, and others one likes to talk to.

RANK.

Yes—there's something in that.

NORA.

When I was a girl, of course I loved papa best. But it always delighted me to steal into the servants' room. In the first place they never lectured me, and in the second it was such fun to hear them talk.

RANK.

Ah, I see; then it's t h e i r place I have taken?

NORA.

[*Jumps up and hurries towards him.*] Oh, my dear Doctor Rank, I don't mean that. But you understand, with Torvald it's the same as with papa—

ELLEN *enters from the hall.*

ELLEN.

Please, ma'am—— [*Whispers to* NORA, *and gives her a card.*]

NORA.

[*Glancing at card.*] Ah! [*Puts it in her pocket.*

RANK.

Anything wrong?

NORA.

No, no, not in the least. It's only—it's my new costume——

RANK.

Your costume! Why, it's there.

NORA.

Oh, that one, yes. But this is another that—I have ordered it—Torvald mustn't know——

RANK.

Aha! So that's the great secret.

NORA.

Yes, of course. Please go to him; he's in the inner room. Do keep him while I——

RANK.

Don't be alarmed; he sha'n't escape.

[*Goes into* HELMER'S *room.*

NORA.

[*To* ELLEN.] Is he waiting in the kitchen?

ELLEN.

Yes, he came up the back stair——

NORA.

Didn't you tell him I was engaged?

ELLEN.

Yes, but it was no use.

NORA.

He won't go away?

ELLEN.

No, ma'am, not until he has spoken to you.

NORA.

Then let him come in; but quietly. And, Ellen—say nothing about it; it's a surprise for my husband.

ELLEN.

Oh, yes, ma'am, I understand. [*She goes out.*

NORA.

It is coming! The dreadful thing is coming, after all. No, no, no, it can never be; it shall not!

[*She goes to* HELMER'S *door and slips the bolt.* ELLEN *opens the hall door for* KROGSTAD, *and shuts it after him. He wears a travelling-coat, high boots, and a fur cap.*

NORA.

[*Goes towards him.*] Speak softly; my husband is at home.

KROGSTAD.

All right. That's nothing to me.

NORA.

What do you want?

KROGSTAD.

A little information.

NORA.

Be quick, then. What is it?

KROGSTAD.

You know I have got my dismissal.

NORA.

I couldn't prevent it, Mr. Krogstad. I fought for you to the last, but it was of no use.

KROGSTAD.

Does your husband care for you so little? He knows what I can bring upon you, and yet he dares——

NORA.

How could you think I should tell him?

KROGSTAD.

Well, as a matter of fact, I didn't think it. It wasn't like my friend Torvald Helmer to show so much courage——

NORA.

Mr. Krogstad, be good enough to speak respectfully of my husband.

KROGSTAD.

Certainly, with all due respect. But since you are so anxious to keep the matter secret, I suppose you are a little clearer than yesterday as to what you have done.

NORA.

Clearer than you could ever make me.

KROGSTAD.

Yes, such a bad lawyer as I——

NORA.

What is it you want?

KROGSTAD.

Only to see how you are getting on, Mrs. Helmer. I've been thinking about you all day. Even a mere money-lender, a gutter-journalist, a—in short, a creature like me—has a little bit of what people call feeling.

NORA.

Then show it; think of my little children.

KROGSTAD.

Did you and your husband think of mine? But enough of that. I only wanted to tell you that you needn't take this matter too seriously. I shall not lodge any information, for the present.

NORA.

No, surely not. I knew you wouldn't.

KROGSTAD.

The whole thing can be settled quite amicably. Nobody need know. It can remain among us three.

NORA.

My husband must never know.

KROGSTAD.

How can you prevent it? Can you pay off the balance?

NORA.

No, not at once.

KROGSTAD.

Or have you any means of raising the money in the next few days?

NORA.

None—that I will make use of.

KROGSTAD.

And if you had, it would not help you now. If you offered me ever so much money down, you should not get back your I.O.U.

NORA.

Tell me what you want to do with it.

KROGSTAD.

I only want to keep it—to have it in my possession. No outsider shall hear anything of it. So, if you have any desperate scheme in your head——

NORA.

What if I have?

KROGSTAD.

If you should think of leaving your husband and children——

NORA.

What if I do?

KROGSTAD.

Or if you should think of—something worse——

NORA.

How do you know that?

KROGSTAD.

Put all that out of your head.

NORA.

How did you know what I had in my mind?

KROGSTAD.

Most of us think of that at first. I thought of it, too; but I hadn't the courage——

NORA.

[*Tonelessly.*] Nor I.

KROGSTAD.

[*Relieved.*] No, one hasn't. You haven't the courage either, have you?

NORA.

I haven't, I haven't.

KROGSTAD.

Besides, it would be very foolish.—Just one domestic storm, and it's all over. I have a letter in my pocket for your husband——

NORA.

Telling him everything?

KROGSTAD.

Sparing you as much as possible.

NORA.

[*Quickly.*] He must never read that letter. Tear it up. I will manage to get the money somehow——

KROGSTAD.

Pardon me, Mrs. Helmer, but I believe I told you——

NORA.

Oh, I'm not talking about the money I owe you. Tell me how much you demand from my husband—I will get it.

KROGSTAD.

I demand no money from your husband.

NORA.

What do you demand then?

KROGSTAD.

I will tell you. I want to regain my footing in the world. I want to rise; and your husband shall help me to do it. For the last eighteen months my record has been spotless; I have been in bitter need all the time; but I was content to fight my way up, step by step. Now, I've been thrust down again, and I will not be satisfied with merely being reinstated as a matter of grace. I want to rise, I tell you. I must get into the Bank again, in a higher position than before. Your husband shall create a place on purpose for me——

NORA.

He will never do that!

KROGSTAD.

He will do it; I know him—he won't dare to show fight! And when he and I are together there, you shall soon see! Before a year is out I shall be the manager's right hand. It won't be Torvald Helmer, but Nils Krogstad, that manages the Joint Stock Bank.

NORA.

That shall never be.

KROGSTAD.

Perhaps you will——?

NORA.

Now I have the courage for it.

KROGSTAD.

Oh, you don't frighten me! A sensitive, petted creature like you——

NORA.

You shall see, you shall see!

KROGSTAD.

Under the ice, perhaps? Down into the cold, black water? And next spring to come up again, ugly, hairless, unrecognisable——

NORA.

You can't terrify me.

KROGSTAD.

Nor you me. People don't do that sort of thing, Mrs. Helmer. And, after all, what would be the use of it? I have your husband in my pocket, all the same.

NORA.

Afterwards? When I am no longer——?

KROGSTAD.

You forget, your reputation remains in my hands! [NORA *stands speechless and looks at him.*] Well, now you are prepared. Do nothing foolish. As soon as Helmer has received my letter, I shall expect to hear from him. And remember that it is your husband himself who has forced me back again into such paths. That I will never forgive him. Good-bye, Mrs. Helmer.

[*Goes out through the hall.* NORA *hurries to the door, opens it a little, and listens.*

NORA.

He's going. He's not putting the letter into the box. No, no, it would be impossible! [*Opens the door further and further.*] What's that. He's standing still; not going down stairs. Has he changed his mind? Is he——? [*A letter falls into the box.* KROGSTAD'S *footsteps are heard gradually receding down the stair.* NORA *utters a suppressed shriek, and rushes forward towards the sofa-table; pause.*] In the letter-box! [*Slips shrinkingly up to the hall door.*] There it lies.—Torvald, Torvald—now we are lost!

MRS. LINDEN *enters from the left with the costume.*

MRS. LINDEN.

There, I think it's all right now. Shall we just try it on?

NORA.

[*Hoarsely and softly.*] Christina, come here.

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Throws down the dress on the sofa.*] What's the matter? You look quite distracted.

NORA.

Come here. Do you see that letter? There, see —through the glass of the letter-box.

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes, yes, I see it.

NORA.

That letter is from Krogstad——

MRS. LINDEN.

Nora—it was Krogstad who lent you the money?

NORA.

Yes; and now Torvald will know everything.

MRS. LINDEN.

Believe me, Nora, it's the best thing for both of you.

NORA.

You don't know all yet. I have forged a name——

MRS. LINDEN.

Good heavens!

NORA.

Now, listen to me, Christina; you shall bear me witness——

MRS. LINDEN.

How "witness"? What am I to——?

NORA.

If I should go out of my mind—it might easily happen——

MRS. LINDEN.

Nora!

NORA.

Or if anything else should happen to me—so that I couldn't be here——!

MRS. LINDEN.

Nora, Nora, you're quite beside yourself!

NORA.

In case any one wanted to take it all upon himself—the whole blame—you understand——

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes, yes; but how can you think——?

NORA.

You shall bear witness that it's not true, Christina. I'm not out of my mind at all; I know quite well what I'm saying; and I tell you nobody else knew anything about it; I did the whole thing, I myself. Remember that.

MRS. LINDEN.

I shall remember. But I don't understand what you mean——

NORA.

Oh, how should you? It's the miracle coming to pass.

MRS. LINDEN.

The miracle?

NORA.

Yes, the miracle. But it's so terrible, Christina; it mustn't happen for all the world.

MRS. LINDEN.

I shall go straight to Krogstad and talk to him.

NORA.

Don't; he'll do you some harm.

MRS. LINDEN.

Once he would have done anything for me.

NORA.

He?

MRS. LINDEN.

Where does he live?

NORA.

Oh, how can I tell——? Yes—— [*Feels in her pocket.*] Here's his card. But the letter, the letter——!

HELMER.

[*Knocking outside.*] Nora!

NORA.

[*Shrieks in terror.*] Oh, what is it? What do you want?

HELMER.

Well, well, don't be frightened. We're not coming in; you've bolted the door. Are you trying on your dress?

NORA.

Yes, yes, I'm trying it on. It suits me so well, Torvald.

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Who has read the card.*] Why, he lives close by here.

NORA.

Yes, but it's no use now. We are lost. The letter is there in the box.

MRS. LINDEN.

And your husband has the key?

NORA.

Always.

MRS. LINDEN.

Krogstad must demand his letter back, unread. He must find some pretext——

NORA.

But this is the very time when Torvald generally——

MRS. LINDEN.

Prevent him. Keep him occupied. I shall come back as quickly as I can.

[*She goes out hastily by the hall door.*

NORA.

[*Opens* HELMER'S *door and peeps in.*] Torvald!

HELMER.

Well, may one come into one's own room again at last? Come, Rank, we'll have a look—— [*In the doorway.*] But how's this?

NORA.

What, Torvald dear?

HELMER.

Rank led me to expect a grand transformation.

RANK.

[*In the doorway.*] So I understood. I suppose I was mistaken.

NORA.

No, no one shall see me in my glory till to-morrow evening.

HELMER.

Why, Nora dear, you look so tired. Have you been practising too hard?

NORA.

No, I haven't practised at all yet.

HELMER.

But you'll have to——

NORA.

Oh yes, I must, I must! But, Torvald, I can't get on at all without your help. I've forgotten everything.

HELMER.

Oh, we shall soon freshen it up again.

NORA.

Yes, do help me, Torvald. You must promise me—— Oh, I'm so nervous about it. Before so many people—— This evening you must give yourself up entirely to me. You mustn't do a stroke of work; you mustn't even touch a pen. Do promise, Torvald dear!

HELMER.

I promise. All this evening I shall be your slave. Little helpless thing——! But, by-the-bye, I must just—— [*Going to hall door.*

NORA.

What do you want there?

HELMER.

Only to see if there are any letters.

NORA.

No, no, don't do that, Torvald.

HELMER.

Why not?

NORA.

Torvald, I beg you not to. There are none there.

HELMER.

Let me just see. [*Is going.*

[NORA, *at the piano, plays the first bars of the tarantella.*

HELMER.

[*At the door, stops.*] Aha!

NORA.

I can't dance to-morrow if I don't rehearse with you first.

HELMER.

[*Going to her.*] Are you really so nervous, dear Nora?

NORA.

Yes, dreadfully! Let me rehearse at once. We have time before dinner. Oh, do sit down and play for me, Torvald dear; direct me and put me right, as you used to do.

HELMER.

With all the pleasure in life, since you wish it.

[*Sits at piano.*

[NORA *snatches the tambourine out of the box, and hurriedly drapes herself in a long parti-coloured shawl; then, with a bound, stands in the middle of the floor.*

NORA.

Now play for me! Now I'll dance!

[HELMER *plays and* NORA *dances.* RANK *stands at the piano behind* HELMER *and looks on.*

HELMER.

[*Playing.*] Slower! Slower!

NORA.

Can't do it slower!

HELMER.

Not so violently, Nora.

NORA.

I must! I must!

HELMER.

[*Stops.*] No, no, Nora—that will never do.

NORA.

[*Laughs and swings her tambourine.*] Didn't I tell you so!

RANK.

Let me play for her.

HELMER.

[*Rising.*] Yes, do—then I can direct her better.

[RANK *sits down to the piano and plays;* NORA *dances more and more wildly.* HELMER *stands by the stove and addresses frequent corrections to her; she seems not to hear. Her hair breaks loose, and falls over her shoulders. She does not notice it, but goes on dancing.* MRS. LINDEN *enters and stands spellbound in the doorway.*

MRS. LINDEN.

Ah——!

NORA.

[*Dancing.*] We're having such fun here, Christina!

HELMER.

Why, Nora dear, you're dancing as if it were a matter of life and death.

NORA.

So it is.

HELMER.

Rank, stop! This is the merest madness. Stop, I say!

[RANK *stops playing, and* NORA *comes to a sudden standstill.*

HELMER.

[*Going towards her.*] I couldn't have believed it. You've positively forgotten all I taught you.

NORA.

[*Throws the tambourine away.*] You see for yourself.

HELMER.

You really do want teaching.

NORA.

Yes, you see how much I need it. You must practise with me up to the last moment. Will you promise me, Torvald?

HELMER.

Certainly, certainly.

NORA.

Neither to-day nor to-morrow must you think of anything but me. You mustn't open a single letter—mustn't look at the letter-box.

HELMER.

Ah, you're still afraid of that man——

NORA.

Oh yes, yes, I am.

HELMER.

Nora, I can see it in your face—there's a letter from him in the box.

NORA.

I don't know, I believe so. But you're not to read anything now; nothing ugly must come between us until all is over.

RANK.

[*Softly, to* HELMER.] You mustn't contradict her.

HELMER.

[*Putting his arm around her.*] The child shall have her own way. But to-morrow night, when the dance is over——

NORA.

Then you shall be free.

ELLEN *appears in the doorway, right.*

ELLEN.

Dinner is on the table, ma'am.

NORA.

We'll have some champagne, Ellen.

ELLEN.

Yes, ma'am. [*Goes out.*]

HELMER.

Dear me! Quite a banquet.

NORA.

Yes, and we'll keep it up till morning. [*Calling out.*] And macaroons, Ellen—plenty—just this once.

HELMER.

[*Seizing her hand.*] Come, come, don't let us have this wild excitement! Be my own little lark again.

NORA.

Oh yes, I will. But now go into the dining-room; and you too, Doctor Rank. Christina, you must help me to do up my hair.

RANK.

[*Softly, as they go.*] There's nothing in the wind? Nothing—I mean——?

HELMER.

Oh no, nothing of the kind. It's merely this babyish anxiety I was telling you about.

[*They go out to the right.*

NORA.

Well?

MRS. LINDEN.

He's gone out of town.

NORA.

I saw it in your face.

MRS. LINDEN.

He comes back to-morrow evening. I left a note for him.

NORA.

You shouldn't have done that. Things must take their course. After all, there's something glorious in waiting for the miracle.

MRS. LINDEN.

What is it you're waiting for?

NORA.

Oh, you can't understand. Go to them in the dining-room; I shall come in a moment.

[MRS. LINDEN *goes into the dining-room.* NORA *stands for a moment as though collecting her thoughts; then looks at her watch.*

NORA.

Five. Seven hours till midnight. Then twenty-four hours till the next midnight. Then the tarantella will be over. Twenty-four and seven? Thirty-one hours to live.

HELMER *appears at the door, right.*

HELMER.

What has become of my little lark?

NORA.

[*Runs to him with open arms.*] Here she is!

ACT THIRD

The same room. The table, with the chairs around it, in the middle. A lighted lamp on the table. The door to the hall stands open. Dance music is heard from the floor above.

MRS. LINDEN *sits by the table and absently turns the pages of a book. She tries to read, but seems unable to fix her attention; she frequently listens and looks anxiously towards the hall door.*

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Looks at her watch.*] Not here yet; and the time is nearly up. If only he hasn't—— [*Listens again.*] Ah, there he is. [*She goes into the hall and cautiously opens the outer door; soft footsteps are heard on the stairs; she whispers.*] Come in; there is no one here.

KROGSTAD.

[*In the doorway.*] I found a note from you at my house. What does it mean?

MRS. LINDEN.

I must speak to you.

KROGSTAD.

Indeed? And in this house?

MRS. LINDEN.

I could not see you at my rooms. They have no separate entrance. Come in; we are quite alone. The servants are asleep, and the Helmers are at the ball upstairs.

KROGSTAD.

[*Coming into the room.*] Ah! So the Helmers are dancing this evening? Really?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes. Why not?

KROGSTAD.

Quite right. Why not?

MRS. LINDEN.

And now let us talk a little.

KROGSTAD.

Have we two anything to say to each other?

MRS. LINDEN.

A great deal.

KROGSTAD.

I should not have thought so.

MRS. LINDEN.

Because you have never really understood me.

KROGSTAD.

What was there to understand? The most natural thing in the world—a heartless woman throws a man over when a better match offers.

MRS. LINDEN.

Do you really think me so heartless? Do you think I broke with you lightly?

KROGSTAD.

Did you not?

MRS. LINDEN.

Do you really think so?

KROGSTAD.

If not, why did you write me that letter?

MRS. LINDEN.

Was it not best? Since I had to break with you, was it not right that I should try to put an end to all that you felt for me?

KROGSTAD.

[*Clenching his hands together.*] So that was it? And all this—for the sake of money!

MRS. LINDEN.

You ought not to forget that I had a helpless mother and two little brothers. We could not wait for you, Nils, as your prospects then stood.

KROGSTAD.

Perhaps not; but you had no right to cast me off for the sake of others, whoever the others might be.

MRS. LINDEN.

I don't know. I have often asked myself whether I had the right.

KROGSTAD.

[*More softly.*] When I had lost you, I seemed to have no firm ground left under my feet. Look at me now. I am a shipwrecked man clinging to a spar.

MRS. LINDEN.

Rescue may be at hand.

KROGSTAD.

It was at hand; but then you came and stood in the way.

MRS. LINDEN.

Without my knowledge, Nils. I did not know till to-day that it was you I was to replace in the Bank.

KROGSTAD.

Well, I take your word for it. But now that you do know, do you mean to give way?

MRS. LINDEN.

No, for that would not help you in the least.

KROGSTAD.

Oh, help, help——! I should do it whether or no.

MRS. LINDEN.

I have learnt prudence. Life and bitter necessity have schooled me.

KROGSTAD.

And life has taught me not to trust fine speeches.

MRS. LINDEN.

Then life has taught you a very sensible thing. But deeds you will trust?

KROGSTAD.

What do you mean?

MRS. LINDEN.

You said you were a shipwrecked man, clinging to a spar.

KROGSTAD.

I have good reason to say so.

MRS. LINDEN.

I too am shipwrecked, and clinging to a spar. I have no one to mourn for, no one to care for.

KROGSTAD.

You made your own choice.

MRS. LINDEN.

No choice was left me.

KROGSTAD.

Well, what then?

MRS. LINDEN.

Nils, how if we two shipwrecked people could join hands?

KROGSTAD.

What!

MRS. LINDEN.

Two on a raft have a better chance than if each clings to a separate spar.

KROGSTAD.

Christina!

MRS. LINDEN.

What do you think brought me to town?

KROGSTAD.

Had you any thought of me?

MRS. LINDEN.

I must have work or I can't bear to live. All my life, as long as I can remember, I have worked; work has been my one great joy. Now I stand quite alone in the world, aimless and forlorn. There is no happiness in working for one's self. Nils, give me somebody and something to work for.

KROGSTAD.

I cannot believe in all this. It is simply a woman's romantic craving for self-sacrifice.

MRS. LINDEN.

Have you ever found me romantic?

KROGSTAD.

Would you really——? Tell me: do you know all my past?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes.

KROGSTAD.

And do you know what people say of me?

MRS. LINDEN.

Did you not say just now that with me you could have been another man?

KROGSTAD.

I am sure of it.

MRS. LINDEN.

Is it too late?

KROGSTAD.

Christina, do you know what you are doing? Yes, you do; I see it in your face. Have you the courage then——?

MRS. LINDEN.

I need some one to be a mother to, and your children need a mother. You need me, and I—I need you. Nils, I believe in your better self. With you I fear nothing.

KROGSTAD.

[*Seizing her hands.*] Thank you—thank you, Christina. Now I shall make others see me as you do.—Ah, I forgot——

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Listening.*] Hush! The tarantella! Go! go!

KROGSTAD.

Why? What is it?

MRS. LINDEN.

Don't you hear the dancing overhead? As soon as that is over they will be here.

KROGSTAD.

Oh yes, I shall go. Nothing will come of this, after all. Of course, you don't know the step I have taken against the Helmers.

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes, Nils, I do know.

KROGSTAD.

And yet you have the courage to——?

MRS. LINDEN.

I know to what lengths despair can drive a man.

KROGSTAD.

Oh, if I could only undo it!

MRS. LINDEN.

You could. Your letter is still in the box.

KROGSTAD.

Are you sure?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes; but——

KROGSTAD.

[*Looking to her searchingly.*] Is that what it all means? You want to save your friend at any price. Say it out—is that your idea?

MRS. LINDEN.

Nils, a woman who has once sold herself for the sake of others, does not do so again.

KROGSTAD.

I shall demand my letter back again.

MRS. LINDEN.

No, no.

KROGSTAD.

Yes, of course. I shall wait till Helmer comes; I shall tell him to give it back to me—that it's only about my dismissal—that I don't want it read——

MRS. LINDEN.

No, Nils, you must not recall the letter.

KROGSTAD.

But tell me, wasn't that just why you got me to come here?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes, in my first alarm. But a day has passed since then, and in that day I have seen incredible things in this house. Helmer must know everything; there must be an end to this unhappy secret. These two must come to a full understanding. They must have done with all these shifts and subterfuges.

KROGSTAD.

Very well, if you like to risk it. But one thing I can do, and at once——

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Listening.*] Make haste! Go, go! The dance is over; we're not safe another moment.

KROGSTAD.

I shall wait for you in the street.

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes, do; you must see me home.

KROGSTAD.

I never was so happy in all my life!

[KROGSTAD *goes out by the outer door. The door between the room and the hall remains open.*

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Arranging the room and getting her outdoor things together.*] What a change! What a change! To have some one to work for, to live for; a home to make happy!

Well, it shall not be my fault if I fail.—I wish they would come.—[*Listens.*] Ah, here they are! I must get my things on.

[*Takes bonnet and cloak.* HELMER'S *and* NORA'S *voices are heard outside, a key is turned in the lock, and* HELMER *drags* NORA *almost by force into the hall. She wears the Italian costume with a large black shawl over it. He is in evening dress and wears a black domino, open.*

NORA.

[*Struggling with him in the doorway.*] No, no, no! I won't go in! I want to go upstairs again; I don't want to leave so early!

HELMER.

But, my dearest girl——!

NORA.

Oh, please, please, Torvald, I beseech you—only one hour more!

HELMER.

Not one minute more, Nora dear; you know what we agreed. Come, come in; you're catching cold here.

[*He leads her gently into the room in spite of her resistance.*

MRS. LINDEN.

Good-evening.

NORA.

Christina!

HELMER.

What, Mrs. Linden! You here so late?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes, I ought to apologise. I did so want to see Nora in her costume.

NORA.

Have you been sitting here waiting for me?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes; unfortunately I came too late. You had gone upstairs already, and I felt I couldn't go away without seeing you.

HELMER.

[*Taking* NORA's *shawl off.*] Well then, just look at her! I assure you she's worth it. Isn't she lovely, Mrs. Linden?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes, I must say——

HELMER.

Isn't she exquisite? Every one said so. But she's dreadfully obstinate, dear little creature. What's to be done with her? Just think, I had almost to force her away.

NORA.

Oh, Torvald, you'll be sorry some day that you didn't let me stay, if only for one half-hour more.

HELMER.

There! You hear her, Mrs. Linden? She dances her tarantella with wild applause, and well she deserved it, I must say—though there was, perhaps, a little too much nature in her rendering of the idea—more than was, strictly speaking, artistic. But never mind—the point is, she made a great success, a tremendous success. Was I to let her remain after that—to weaken the impression? Not if I know it. I took my sweet little Capri girl—my capricious little Capri girl, I might say—under my arm; a rapid turn round the room, a curtsey to all sides, and—as they say in novels—the lovely apparition vanished! An exit should always be effective, Mrs. Linden; but I can't get Nora to see it. By Jove! it's warm here. [*Throws his domino on a chair and opens the door to his room.*] What! No light there? Oh, of course. Excuse me—— [*Goes in and lights candles.*

NORA.

[*Whispers breathlessly.*] Well?

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Softly.*] I've spoken to him.

NORA.

And——?

MRS. LINDEN.

Nora—you must tell your husband everything——

NORA.

[*Tonelessly.*] I knew it!

MRS. LINDEN.

You have nothing to fear from Krogstad; but you must speak out.

NORA.

I shall not speak!

MRS. LINDEN.

Then the letter will.

NORA.

Thank you, Christina. Now I know what I have to do. Hush——!

HELMER.

[*Coming back.*] Well, Mrs. Linden, have you admired her?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes; and now I must say good-night.

HELMER.

What, already? Does this knitting belong to you?

MRS. LINDEN.

[*Takes it.*] Yes, thanks; I was nearly forgetting it.

HELMER.

Then you do knit?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes.

HELMER.

Do you know, you ought to embroider instead?

MRS. LINDEN.

Indeed! Why?

HELMER.

Because it's so much prettier. Look now! You hold the embroidery in the left hand, so, and then work the needle with the right hand, in a long, graceful curve—don't you?

MRS. LINDEN.

Yes, I suppose so.

HELMER.

But knitting is always ugly. Just look—your arms close to your sides, and the needles going up and down—there's something Chinese about it.—They really gave us splendid champagne to-night.

MRS. LINDEN.

Well, good-night, Nora, and don't be obstinate any more.

HELMER.

Well said, Mrs. Linden!

MRS. LINDEN.

Good-night, Mr. Helmer.

HELMER.

[*Accompanying her to the door.*] Good-night, good-night; I hope you'll get safely home. I should be glad to—but you have such a short way to go. Good-night, good-night. [*She goes;* HELMER *shuts the door after her and comes forward again.*] At last we've got rid of her: she's a terrible bore.

NORA.

Aren't you very tired, Torvald?

HELMER.

No, not in the least.

NORA.

Nor sleepy?

HELMER.

Not a bit. I feel particularly lively. But you? You do look tired and sleepy.

NORA.

Yes, very tired. I shall soon sleep now.

HELMER.

There, you see. I was right after all not to let you stay longer.

NORA.

Oh, everything you do is right.

HELMER.

[*Kissing her forehead.*] Now my lark is speaking like a reasonable being. Did you notice how jolly Rank was this evening?

NORA.

Indeed? Was he? I had no chance of speaking to him.

HELMER.

Nor I, much; but I haven't seen him in such good spirits for a long time. [*Looks at* NORA *a little, then*

comes nearer her.] It's splendid to be back in our own home, to be quite alone together!—Oh, you enchanting creature!

NORA.

Don't look at me in that way, Torvald.

HELMER.

I am not to look at my dearest treasure?—at all the oveliness that is mine, mine only, wholly and entirely mine?

NORA.

[*Goes to the other side of the table.*] You mustn't say these things to me this evening.

HELMER.

[*Following.*] I see you have the tarantella still in your blood—and that makes you all the more enticing. Listen! the other people are going now. [*More softly.*] Nora—soon the whole house will be still.

NORA.

Yes, I hope so.

HELMER.

Yes, don't you, Nora darling? When we are among strangers, do you know why I speak so little to you, and keep so far away, and only steal a glance at you now and then—do you know why I do it? Because I am fancying that we love each other in secret, that I am secretly betrothed to you, and that no one dreams that there is anything between us.

NORA.

Yes, yes, yes. I know all your thoughts are with me.

HELMER.

And then, when the time comes to go, and I put the shawl about your smooth, soft shoulders, and this glorious neck of yours, I imagine you are my bride, that our marriage is just over, that I am bringing you for the first time to my home—that I am alone with you for the first time—quite alone with you, in your trembling loveliness! All this evening I have been longing for you, and you only. When I watched you swaying and whirling in the tarantella—my blood boiled—I could endure it no longer; and that's why I made you come home with me so early——

NORA.

Go now, Torvald! Go away from me. I won't have all this.

HELMER.

What do you mean? Ah, I see you're teasing me, little Nora! Won't—won't! Am I not your husband——? [*A knock at the outer door.*

NORA.

[*Starts.*] Did you hear——?

HELMER.

[*Going towards the hall.*] Who's there?

RANK.

[*Outside.*] It is I; may I come in for a moment?

HELMER.

[*In a low tone, annoyed.*] Oh, what can he want just now? [*Aloud.*] Wait a moment. [*Opens door.*] Come, it's nice of you to look in.

RANK.

I thought I heard your voice, and that put it into my head. [*Looks round.*] Ah, this dear old place! How cosy you two are here!

HELMER.

You seemed to find it pleasant enough upstairs, too.

RANK.

Exceedingly. Why not? Why shouldn't one take one's share of everything in this world? All one can, at least, and as long as one can. The wine was splendid——

HELMER.

Especially the champagne.

RANK.

Did you notice it? It's incredible the quantity I contrived to get down.

NORA.

Torvald drank plenty of champagne, too.

RANK.

Did he?

NORA.

Yes, and it always puts him in such spirits.

RANK.

Well, why shouldn't one have a jolly evening after a well-spent day?

HELMER.

Well-spent! Well, I haven't much to boast of in that respect.

RANK.

[*Slapping him on the shoulder.*] But I have, don't you see?

NORA.

I suppose you have been engaged in a scientific investigation, Doctor Rank?

RANK.

Quite right.

HELMER.

Bless me! Little Nora talking about scientific investigations!

NORA.

Am I to congratulate you on the result?

RANK.

By all means.

NORA.

It was good then?

RANK.

The best possible, both for doctor and patient—certainty.

NORA.

[*Quickly and searchingly.*] Certainty?

RANK.

Absolute certainty. Wasn't I right to enjoy myself after that?

NORA.

Yes, quite right, Doctor Rank.

HELMER.

And so say I, provided you don't have to pay for it to-morrow.

RANK.

Well, in this life nothing is to be had for nothing.

NORA.

Doctor Rank—I'm sure you are very fond of masquerades?

RANK.

Yes, when there are plenty of amusing disguises——

NORA.

Tell me, what shall we two be at our next masquerade?

HELMER.

Little featherbrain! Thinking of your next already!

RANK.

We two? I'll tell you. You must go as a good fairy.

HELMER.

Ah, but what costume would indicate that?

RANK.

She has simply to wear her everyday dress.

HELMER.

Capital! But don't you know what you will be yourself?

RANK.

Yes, my dear friend, I am perfectly clear upon that point.

HELMER.

Well?

RANK.

At the next masquerade I shall be invisible.

HELMER.

What a comical idea!

RANK.

There's a big black hat—haven't you heard of the invisible hat? It comes down all over you, and then no one can see you.

HELMER.

[*With a suppressed smile.*] No, you're right there.

RANK.

But I'm quite forgetting what I came for. Helmer, give me a cigar—one of the dark Havanas.

HELMER.

With the greatest pleasure. [*Hands cigar-case.*

RANK.

[*Takes one and cuts the end off.*] Thank you.

NORA.

[*Striking a wax match.*] Let me give you a light.

RANK.

A thousand thanks.

[*She holds the match. He lights his cigar at it.*

RANK.

And now, good-bye!

HELMER.

Good-bye, good-bye, my dear fellow.

NORA.

Sleep well, Doctor Rank.

RANK.

Thanks for the wish.

NORA.

Wish me the same.

RANK.

You? Very well, since you ask me—Sleep well. And thanks for the light. [*He nods to them both and goes out.*

HELMER.

[*In an undertone.*] He's been drinking a good deal.

NORA.

[*Absently.*] I daresay. [HELMER *takes his bunch of keys from his pocket and goes into the hall.*] Torvald, what are you doing there?

HELMER.

I must empty the letter-box; it's quite full; there will be no room for the newspapers to-morrow morning.

NORA.

Are you going to work to-night?

HELMER.

You know very well I am not.—Why, how is this? Some one has been at the lock.

NORA.

The lock——?

HELMER.

I'm sure of it. What does it mean? I can't think that the servants——? Here's a broken hair-pin. Nora, it's one of yours.

NORA.

[*Quickly.*] It must have been the children——

HELMER.

Then you must break them of such tricks.—There! At last I've got it open. [*Takes contents out and calls into the kitchen.*] Ellen!—Ellen, just put the hall door lamp out.

[*He returns with letters in his hand, and shuts the inner door,*

HELMER.

Just see how they've accumulated. [*Turning them over.*] Why, what's this?

NORA.

[*At the window.*] The letter! Oh no, no, Torvald!

HELMER.

Two visiting-cards—from Rank.

NORA.

From Doctor Rank?

HELMER.

[*Looking at them.*] Doctor Rank. They were on the top. He must just have put them in.

NORA.

Is there anything on them?

HELMER.

There's a black cross over the name. Look at it. What an unpleasant idea! It looks just as if he were announcing his own death.

NORA.

So he is.

HELMER.

What! Do you know anything? Has he told you anything?

NORA.

Yes. These cards mean that he has taken his last leave of us. He is going to shut himself up and die.

HELMER.

Poor fellow! Of course I knew we couldn't hope to keep him long. But so soon——! And to go and creep into his lair like a wounded animal——

NORA.

When we m u s t go, it is best to go silently. Don't you think so, Torvald?

HELMER.

[*Walking up and down.*] He had so grown into our lives, I can't realise that he is gone. He and his sufferings and his loneliness formed a sort of cloudy background to the sunshine of our happiness.—Well, perhaps it's best as it is—at any rate for him. [*Stands still.*] And perhaps for us too, Nora. Now we two are thrown entirely upon each other. [*Takes her in his arms.*] My darling wife! I feel as if I could never hold you close enough. Do you know, Nora, I often wish some danger might threaten you, that I might risk body and soul, and everything, everything, for your dear sake.

NORA.

[*Tears herself from him and says firmly.*] Now you shall read your letters, Torvald.

HELMER.

No, no; not to-night. I want to be with you, my sweet wife.

NORA.

With the thought of your dying friend——?

HELMER.

You are right. This has shaken us both. Unloveliness has come between us—thoughts of death and decay. We must seek to cast them off. Till then—we will remain apart.

NORA.

[*Her arms round his neck.*] Torvald! Good-night! good-night!

HELMER.

[*Kissing her forehead.*] Good-night, my little songbird. Sleep well, Nora. Now I shall go and read my letters.

[*He goes with the letters in his hand into his room and shuts the door.*

NORA.

[*With wild eyes, gropes about her, seizes* HELMER'S *domino, throws it round her, and whispers quickly, hoarsely, and brokenly.*] Never to see him again. Never, never, never. [*Throws her shawl over her head.*] Never to see the children again. Never, never.—Oh that black, icy water! Oh that bottomless——! If it were only over! Now he has it; he's reading it. Oh, no, no, no, not yet. Torvald, good-bye——! Good-bye, my little ones——!

[*She is rushing out by the hall; at the same moment* HELMER *flings his door open, and stands there with an open letter in his hand.*

HELMER.

Nora!

NORA.

[*Shrieks.*] Ah——!

HELMER.

What is this? Do you know what is in this letter?

NORA.

Yes, I know. Let me go! Let me pass!

HELMER.

[*Holds her back.*] Where do you want to go?

NORA.

[*Tries to break away from him.*] You shall not save me, Torvald.

HELMER.

[*Falling back.*] True! Is what he writes true? No, no, it is impossible that this can be true.

NORA.

It is true. I have loved you beyond all else in the world.

HELMER.

Pshaw—no silly evasions!

NORA.

[*A step nearer him.*] Torvald——!

HELMER.

Wretched woman—what have you done!

NORA.

Let me go—you shall not save me! You shall not take my guilt upon yourself!

HELMER.

I don't want any melodramatic airs. [*Locks the outer door.*] Here you shall stay and give an account of yourself. Do you understand what you have done? Answer! Do you understand it?

NORA.

[*Looks at him fixedly, and says with a stiffening expression.*] Yes; now I begin fully to understand it.

HELMER.

[*Walking up and down.*] Oh! what an awful awakening! During all these eight years—she who was my pride and my joy—a hypocrite, a liar—worse, worse—a criminal. Oh, the unfathomable hideousness of it all! Ugh! Ugh!

[NORA *says nothing, and continues to look fixedly at him.*

HELMER.

I ought to have known how it would be. I ought to have foreseen it. All your father's want of principle—be silent!—all your father's want of principle you have inherited—no religion, no morality, no sense of duty. How I am punished for screening him! I did it for your sake; and you reward me like this.

NORA.

Yes—like this.

HELMER.

You have destroyed my whole happiness. You have ruined my future. Oh, it's frightful to think of! I am in the power of a scoundrel; he can do whatever he pleases with me, demand whatever he chooses; he can domineer over me as much as he likes, and I must submit. And all this disaster and ruin is brought upon me by an unprincipled woman!

NORA.

When I am out of the world, you will be free.

HELMER.

Oh, no fine phrases. Your father, too, was always ready with them. What good would it do me, if you were "out of the world," as you say? No good whatever! He can publish the story all the same; I might even be suspected of collusion. People will think I was at the bottom of it all and egged you on. And for all this I have you to thank—you whom I have done nothing but pet and spoil during our whole married life. Do you understand now what you have done to me?

NORA.

[*With cold calmness.*] Yes.

HELMER.

The thing is so incredible, I can't grasp it. But we must come to an understanding. Take that shawl off.

Take it off, I say! I must try to pacify him in one way or another—the matter must be hushed up, cost what it may.—As for you and me, we must make no outward change in our way of life—no outward change, you understand. Of course, you will continue to live here. But the children cannot be left in your care. I dare not trust them to you.—Oh, to have to say this to one I have loved so tenderly—whom I still——! But that must be a thing of the past. Henceforward there can be no question of happiness, but merely of saving the ruins, the shreds, the show—— [*A ring;* HELMER *starts.*] What's that? So late! Can it be the worst? Can he——? Hide yourself, Nora; say you are ill.

[NORA *stands motionless.* HELMER *goes to the door and opens it.*

ELLEN.

[*Half dressed, in the hall.*] Here is a letter for you, ma'am.

HELMER.

Give it to me. [*Seizes the letter and shuts the door.*] Yes, from him. You shall not have it. I shall read it.

NORA.

Read it!

HELMER.

[*By the lamp.*] I have hardly the courage to. We may both be lost, both you and I. Ah! I must know. [*Hastily tears the letter open; reads a few lines, looks at an enclosure; with a cry of joy.*] Nora!

[NORA *looks inquiringly at him.*

HELMER.

Nora!—Oh! I must read it again.—Yes, yes, it is so. I am saved! Nora, I am saved!

NORA.

And I?

HELMER.

You too, of course; we are both saved, both of us. Look here—he sends you back your promissory note. He writes that he regrets and apologises, that a happy turn in his life—— Oh, what matter what he writes. We are saved, Nora! No one can harm you. Oh, Nora, Nora——; but first to get rid of this hateful thing. I'll just see—— [*Glances at the I.O.U.*] No, I will not look at it; the whole thing shall be nothing but a dream to me. [*Tears the I.O.U. and both letters in pieces. Throws them into the fire and watches them burn.*] There! it's gone!—He said that ever since Christmas Eve—— Oh, Nora, they must have been three terrible days for you!

NORA.

I have fought a hard fight for the last three days.

HELMER.

And in your agony you saw no other outlet but—— No; we won't think of that horror. We will only rejoice and repeat—it's over, all over! Don't you hear, Nora? You don't seem able to grasp it. Yes, it's over. What is this set look on your face? Oh, my poor Nora, I understand; you cannot believe that I have forgiven you. But I have, Nora; I swear it. I have forgiven

everything. I know that what you did was all for love of me.

NORA.

That is true.

HELMER.

You loved me as a wife should love her husband. It was only the means that, in your inexperience, you misjudged. But do you think I love you the less because you cannot do without guidance? No, no. Only lean on me; I will counsel you, and guide you. I should be no true man if this very womanly helplessness did not make you doubly dear in my eyes. You mustn't dwell upon the hard things I said in my first moment of terror, when the world seemed to be tumbling about my ears. I have forgiven you, Nora—I swear I have forgiven you.

NORA.

I thank you for your forgiveness.

[*Goes out, to the right.*

HELMER.

No, stay——! [*Looking through the doorway.*] What are you going to do?

NORA.

[*Inside.*] To take off my masquerade dress.

HELMER.

[*In the doorway.*] Yes, do, dear. Try to calm down, and recover your balance, my scared little song-bird. You may rest secure. I have broad wings to shield you. [*Walking up and down near the door.*] Oh, how lovely—

how cosy our home is, Nora! Here you are safe; here I can shelter you like a hunted dove whom I have saved from the claws of the hawk. I shall soon bring your poor beating heart to rest; believe me, Nora, very soon. To-morrow all this will seem quite different—everything will be as before. I shall not need to tell you again that I forgive you; you will feel for yourself that it is true. How could you think I could find it in my heart to drive you away, or even so much as to reproach you? Oh, you don't know a true man's heart, Nora. There is something indescribably sweet and soothing to a man in having forgiven his wife—honestly forgiven her, from the bottom of his heart. She becomes his property in a double sense. She is as though born again; she has become, so to speak, at once his wife and his child. That is what you shall henceforth be to me, my bewildered, helpless darling. Don't be troubled about anything, Nora; only open your heart to me, and I will be both will and conscience to you. [NORA *enters in every-day dress.*] Why, what's this? Not gone to bed? You have changed your dress?

NORA.

Yes, Torvald; now I have changed my dress.

HELMER.

But why now, so late——?

NORA.

I shall not sleep to-night.

HELMER.

But, Nora dear——

NORA.

[*Looking at her watch.*] It's not so late yet. Sit down, Torvald; you and I have much to say to each other.

[*She sits at one side of the table.*

HELMER.

Nora—what does this mean? Your cold, set face——

NORA.

Sit down. It will take some time. I have much to talk over with you.

[HELMER *sits at the other side of the table.*

HELMER.

You alarm me, Nora. I don't understand you.

NORA.

No, that is just it. You don't understand me; and I have never understood you—till to-night. No, don't interrupt. Only listen to what I say.—We must come to a final settlement, Torvald.

HELMER.

How do you mean?

NORA.

[*After a short silence.*] Does not one thing strike you as we sit here?

HELMER.

What should strike me?

NORA.

We have been married eight years. Does it not strike you that this is the first time we two, you and I, man and wife, have talked together seriously?

HELMER.

Seriously! What do you call seriously?

NORA.

During eight whole years, and more—ever since the day we first met—we have never exchanged one serious word about serious things.

HELMER.

Was I always to trouble you with the cares you could not help me to bear?

NORA.

I am not talking of cares. I say that we have never yet set ourselves seriously to get to the bottom of anything.

HELMER.

Why, my dearest Nora, what have you to do with serious things?

NORA.

There we have it! You have never understood me.—I have had great injustice done me, Torvald; first by father, and then by you.

HELMER.

What! By your father and me?—By us, who have loved you more than all the world?

NORA.

[*Shaking her head.*] You have never loved me. You only thought it amusing to be in love with me.

HELMER.

Why, Nora, what a thing to say!

NORA.

Yes, it is so, Torvald. While I was at home with father, he used to tell me all his opinions, and I held the same opinions. If I had others I said nothing about them, because he wouldn't have liked it. He used to call me his doll-child, and played with me as I played with my dolls. Then I came to live in your house——

HELMER.

What an expression to use about our marriage!

NORA.

[*Undisturbed.*] I mean I passed from father's hands into yours. You arranged everything according to your taste; and I got the same tastes as you; or I pretended to—I don't know which—both ways, perhaps; sometimes one and sometimes the other. When I look back on it now, I seem to have been living here like a beggar, from hand to mouth. I lived by performing tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. You and father have done me a great wrong. It is your fault that my life has come to nothing.

HELMER.

Why, Nora, how unreasonable and ungrateful you are! Have you not been happy here?

NORA.

No, never. I thought I was; but I never was.

HELMER.

Not—not happy!

NORA.

No; only merry. And you have always been so kind to me. But our house has been nothing but a play-room. Here I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I used to be papa's doll-child. And the children, in their turn, have been my dolls. I thought it fun when you played with me, just as the children did when I played with them. That has been our marriage, Torvald.

HELMER.

There is some truth in what you say, exaggerated and overstrained though it be. But henceforth it shall be different. Play-time is over; now comes the time for education.

NORA.

Whose education? Mine, or the children's?

HELMER.

Both, my dear Nora.

NORA.

Oh, Torvald, you are not the man to teach me to be a fit wife for you.

HELMER.

And you can say that?

NORA.

And I—how have I prepared myself to educate the children?

HELMER.

Nora!

NORA.

Did you not say yourself, a few minutes ago, you dared not trust them to me?

HELMER.

In the excitement of the moment! Why should you dwell upon that?

NORA.

No—you were perfectly right. That problem is beyond me. There is another to be solved first—I must try to educate myself. You are not the man to help me in that. I must set about it alone. And that is why I am leaving you.

HELMER.

[*Jumping up.*] What—do you mean to say——?

NORA.

I must stand quite alone if I am ever to know myself and my surroundings; so I cannot stay with you.

HELMER.

Nora! Nora!

NORA.

I am going at once. I daresay Christina will take me in for to-night——

HELMER.

You are mad! I shall not allow it! I forbid it!

NORA.

It is of no use your forbidding me anything now. I shall take with me what belongs to me. From you I will accept nothing, either now or afterwards.

HELMER.

What madness this is!

NORA.

To-morrow I shall go home—I mean to what was my home. It will be easier for me to find some opening there.

HELMER.

Oh, in your blind inexperience——

NORA.

I must try to g a i n experience, Torvald.

HELMER.

To forsake your home, your husband, and your children! And you don't consider what the world will say.

NORA.

I can pay no heed to that. I only know that I must do it.

HELMER.

This is monstrous! Can you forsake your holiest duties in this way?

NORA.

What do you consider my holiest duties?

HELMER.

Do I need to tell you that? Your duties to your husband and your children.

NORA.

I have other duties equally sacred.

HELMER.

Impossible! What duties do you mean?

NORA.

My duties towards myself.

HELMER.

Before all else you are a wife and a mother.

NORA.

That I no longer believe. I believe that before all else I am a human being, just as much as you are—or at least that I should try to become one. I know that most people agree with you, Torvald, and that they say so in books. But henceforth I can't be satisfied with what most people say, and what is in books. I must think things out for myself, and try to get clear about them.

HELMER.

Are you not clear about your place in your own home? Have you not an infallible guide in questions like these? Have you not religion?

NORA.

Oh, Torvald, I don't really know what religion is.

HELMER.

What do you mean?

NORA.

I know nothing but what Pastor Hansen told me when I was confirmed. He explained that religion was this and that. When I get away from all this and stand alone, I will look into that matter too. I will see whether what he taught me is right, or, at any rate, whether it is right for me.

HELMER.

Oh, this is unheard of! And from so young a woman! But if religion cannot keep you right, let me appeal to your conscience—for I suppose you have some moral feeling? Or, answer me: perhaps you have none?

NORA.

Well, Torvald, it's not easy to say. I really don't know—I am all at sea about these things. I only know that I think quite differently from you about them. I hear, too, that the laws are different from what I thought; but I can't believe that they can be right. It appears that a woman has no right to spare her dying father, or to save her husband's life! I don't believe that.

HELMER.

You talk like a child. You don't understand the society in which you live.

NORA.

No, I do not. But now I shall try to learn. I must make up my mind which is right—society or I.

HELMER.

Nora, you are ill; you are feverish; I almost think you are out of your senses.

NORA.

I have never felt so much clearness and certainty as to-night.

HELMER.

You are clear and certain enough to forsake husband and children?

NORA.

Yes, I am.

HELMER.

Then there is only one explanation possible.

NORA.

What is that?

HELMER.

You no longer love me.

NORA.

No; that is just it.

HELMER.

Nora!—Can you say so!

NORA.

Oh, I'm so sorry, Torvald; for you've always been so kind to me. But I can't help it. I do not love you any longer.

HELMER.

[*Mastering himself with difficulty.*] Are you clear and certain on this point too?

NORA.

Yes, quite. That is why I will not stay here any longer.

HELMER.

And can you also make clear to me how I have forfeited your love?

NORA.

Yes, I can. It was this evening, when the miracle did not happen; for then I saw you were not the man I had imagined.

HELMER.

Explain yourself more clearly; I don't understand.

NORA.

I have waited so patiently all these eight years; for of course I saw clearly enough that miracles don't happen every day. When this crushing blow threatened me, I said to myself so confidently, "Now comes the miracle!" When Krogstad's letter lay in the box, it never for a moment occurred to me that you would think of submitting to that man's conditions. I was convinced that you would say to him, "Make it known to all the world"; and that then——

HELMER.

Well? When I had given my own wife's name up to disgrace and shame——?

NORA.

Then I firmly believed that you would come forward, take everything upon yourself, and say, "I am the guilty one."

HELMER.

Nora——!

NORA.

You mean I would never have accepted such a sacrifice? No, certainly not. But what would my assertions have been worth in opposition to yours?—T h a t was the miracle that I hoped for and dreaded. And it was to hinder t h a t that I wanted to die.

HELMER.

I would gladly work for you day and night, Nora—bear sorrow and want for your sake. But no man sacrifices his honour, even for one he loves.

NORA.

Millions of women have done so.

HELMER.

Oh, you think and talk like a silly child.

NORA.

Very likely. But you neither think nor talk like the man I can share my life with. When your terror was

over—not for what threatened me, but for yourself—when there was nothing more to fear—then it seemed to you as though nothing had happened. I was your lark again, your doll, just as before—whom you would take twice as much care of in future, because she was so weak and fragile. [*Stands up.*] Torvald—in that moment it burst upon me that I had been living here these eight years with a strange man, and had borne him three children.—Oh, I can't bear to think of it! I could tear myself to pieces!

HELMER.

[*Sadly.*] I see it, I see it; an abyss has opened between us.—But, Nora, can it never be filled up?

NORA.

As I now am, I am no wife for you.

HELMER.

I have strength to become another man.

NORA.

Perhaps—when your doll is taken away from you.

HELMER.

To part—to part from you! No, Nora, no; I can't grasp the thought.

NORA.

[*Going into room on the right.*] The more reason for the thing to happen.

[*She comes back with out-door things and a small travelling-bag, which she places on a chair.*

HELMER.

Nora, Nora, not now! Wait till to-morrow.

NORA.

[*Putting on cloak.*] I can't spend the night in a strange man's house.

HELMER.

But can we not live here, as brother and sister——?

NORA.

[*Fastening her hat.*] You know very well that wouldn't last long. [*Puts on the shawl.*] Good-bye, Torvald. No, I won't go to the children. I know they are in better hands than mine. As I now am, I can be nothing to them.

HELMER.

But some time, Nora—some time——?

NORA.

How can I tell? I have no idea what will become of me.

HELMER.

But you are my wife, now and always!

NORA.

Listen, Torvald—when a wife leaves her husband's house, as I am doing, I have heard that in the eyes of the law he is free from all duties towards her. At any rate, I release you from all duties. You must not feel your-

self bound, any more than I shall. There must be perfect freedom on both sides. There, I give you back your ring. Give me mine.

HELMER.

That too?

NORA.

That too.

HELMER.

Here it is.

NORA.

Very well. Now it is all over. I lay the keys here. The servants know about everything in the house—better than I do. To-morrow, when I have started, Christina will come to pack up the things I brought with me from home. I will have them sent after me.

HELMER.

All over! all over! Nora, will you never think of me again?

NORA.

Oh, I shall often think of you, and the children, and this house.

HELMER.

May I write to you, Nora?

NORA.

No—never. You must not.

HELMER.

But I must send you——

NORA.

Nothing, nothing.

HELMER.

I must help you if you need it.

NORA.

No, I say. I take nothing from strangers.

HELMER.

Nora—can I never be more than a stranger to you?

NORA.

[*Taking her travelling-bag.*] Oh, Torvald, then the miracle of miracles would have to happen——

HELMER.

What is the miracle of miracles?

NORA.

Both of us would have to change so that—— Oh, Torvald, I no longer believe in miracles.

HELMER.

But *I* will believe. Tell me! We must so change that——?

NORA.

That communion between us shall be a marriage. Good-bye. [*She goes out by the hall door.*

HELMER.

[*Sinks into a chair by the door with his face in his hands.*] Nora! Nora! [*He looks round and rises.*] Empty. She is gone. [*A hope springs up in him.*] Ah! The miracle of miracles——?!

[*From below is heard the reverberation of a heavy door closing.*

THE END.

GHOSTS.

GHOSTS.

INTRODUCTION.*

THE winter of 1879–80 Ibsen spent in Munich, and the greater part of the summer of 1880 at Berchtesgaden. November 1880 saw him back in Rome, and he passed the summer of 1881 at Sorrento. There, fourteen years earlier, he had written the last acts of *Peer Gynt*: there he now wrote, or at any rate completed, *Gengangere*.

The surviving "foreworks" for this play are very scanty. Of the dialogue only two or three brief fragments remain. The longest is a sketch of the passage in which Oswald shocks Pastor Manders by his account of artist life in Paris. We possess, however, some scattered memoranda relating to the play, some of them written on the back of an envelope addressed to "Madame Ibsen, 75 via Capo le Case, Città" (that is to say, Rome). They run as follows:

The piece will be like an image of life. Faith undermined. But it does not do to say so. "The Asylum" —for the sake of others. They shall be happy—but this also is only an appearance—it is all ghosts.

One main point. She has been believing and romantic —this is not wholly obliterated by the stand-point afterwards attained—"It is all ghosts."

It brings a Nemesis on the offspring to marry for external reasons, even if they be religious or moral.

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She, the illegitimate child, may be saved by being married to—the son—but then——?

He was in his youth dissipated and worn out; then she, the religiously awakened, appeared; she saved him; she was rich. He had wanted to marry a girl who was thought unworthy. He had a son in his marriage; then he returned to the girl; a daughter——

These women of to-day, ill-treated as daughters, as sisters, as wives, not educated according to their gifts, withheld from their vocation, deprived of their heritage, embittered in mind—these it is who furnish the mothers of a new generation. What will be the consequence?

The fundamental note shall be the richly flourishing spiritual life among us in literature, art, etc.; and then, as a contrast, all humanity astray on wrong paths.

The complete human being is no longer a natural product, but a product of art, as corn is, and fruit-trees, and the creole race, and the higher breeds of horses and dogs, the vine, etc.

The fault lies in the fact that all humanity has miscarried. When man demands to live and develop humanly, it is megalomania. All humanity, and most of all the Christians, suffer from megalomania.

Among us we place monuments over the dead, for we recognise duties towards them; we allow people only fit for the hospital [literally, lepers] to marry: but their offspring—? The unborn——?

The fourth and fifth of these six sections seem to have as much bearing on other plays—for instance, *An Enemy*

of the People, and *The Lady from the Sea*—as on *Ghosts*. I should take them rather for general memoranda than for notes specially referring to this play.

Gengangere was published in December 1881, after he had returned to Rome. On December 22 he wrote to Ludwig Passarge, one of his German translators, "My new play has now appeared, and has occasioned a terrible uproar in the Scandinavian press; every day I receive letters and newspaper articles decrying or praising it. . . . I consider it utterly impossible that any German theatre should accept the play at present. I hardly believe that they will dare to play it in the Scandinavian countries for some time to come." How rightly he judged we shall see anon.

In the newspapers there was far more obloquy than praise. Two men, however, stood by him from the first: Björnson, from whom he had been practically estranged ever since *The League of Youth*, and George Brandes. The latter published an article in which he declared (I quote from memory) that the play might or might not be Ibsen's greatest work, but that it was certainly his noblest deed. It was, doubtless, in acknowledgment of this article that Ibsen wrote to Brandes on January 3, 1882: "Yesterday I had the great pleasure of receiving your brilliantly clear and so warmly appreciative review of *Ghosts*. . . . All who read your article must, it seems to me, have their eyes opened to what I meant by my new book—assuming, that is, that they have any *wish* to see. For I cannot get rid of the impression that a very large number of the false interpretations which have appeared in the newspapers are the work of people who know bet-

ter. In Norway, however, I am willing to believe that the stultification has in most cases been unintentional; and the reason is not far to seek. In that country a great many of the critics are theologians, more or less disguised; and these gentlemen are, as a rule, quite unable to write rationally about creative literature. That enfeeblement of judgment which, at least in the case of the average man, is an inevitable consequence of prolonged occupation with theological studies, betrays itself more especially in the judging of human character, human actions, and human motives. Practical business judgment, on the other hand, does not suffer so much from studies of this order. Therefore the reverend gentlemen are very often excellent members of local boards; but they are unquestionably our worst critics." This passage is interesting as showing clearly the point of view from which Ibsen conceived the character of Manders. In the next paragraph of the same letter he discusses the attitude of "the so-called Liberal press"; but as the paragraph contains the germ of *An Enemy of the People*, it may most fittingly be quoted in the Introduction to that play.

Three days later (January 6) Ibsen wrote to Schandorph, the Danish novelist: "I was quite prepared for the hubbub. If certain of our Scandinavian reviewers have no talent for anything else, they have an unquestionable talent for thoroughly misunderstanding and misinterpreting those authors whose books they undertake to judge. . . They endeavour to make me responsible for the opinions which certain of the personages of my drama express. And yet there is not in the whole book a single opinion, a single utterance, which can

be laid to the account of the author. I took good care to avoid this. The very method, the order of technique which imposes its form upon the play, forbids the author to appear in the speeches of his characters. My object was to make the reader feel that he was going through a piece of real experience; and nothing could more effectually prevent such an impression than the intrusion of the author's private opinions into the dialogue. Do they imagine at home that I am so inexpert in the theory of drama as not to know this? Of course I know it, and act accordingly. In no other play that I have written is the author so external to the action, so entirely absent from it, as in this last one."

"They say," he continued, "that the book preaches Nihilism. Not at all. It is not concerned to preach anything whatsoever. It merely points to the ferment of Nihilism going on under the surface, at home as elsewhere. A Pastor Manders will always goad one or other Mrs. Alving to revolt. And just because she is a woman, she will, when once she has begun, go to the utmost extremes."

Towards the end of January Ibsen wrote from Rome to Olaf Skavlan: "These last weeks have brought me a wealth of experiences, lessons, and discoveries. I of course foresaw that my new play would call forth a howl from the camp of the stagnationists; and for this I care no more than for the barking of a pack of chained dogs. But the pusillanimity which I have observed among the so-called Liberals has given me cause for reflection. The very day after my play was published, the *Dagblad* rushed out a hurriedly-written article, evidently designed to

purge itself of all suspicion of complicity in my work. This was entirely unnecessary. I myself am responsible for what I write, I, and no one else. I cannot possibly embarrass any party, for to no party do I belong. I stand like a solitary franc-tireur at the outposts, and fight for my own hand. The only man in Norway who has stood up freely, frankly, and courageously for me is Björnson. It is just like him. He has in truth a great, kingly soul, and I shall never forget his action in this matter."

One more quotation completes the history of these stirring January days, as written by Ibsen himself. It occurs in a letter to a Danish journalist, Otto Borchsenius. "It may well be," the poet writes, "that the play is in several respects rather daring. But it seemed to me that the time had come for moving some boundary-posts. And this was an undertaking for which a man of the older generation, like myself, was better fitted than the many younger authors who might desire to do something of the kind. I was prepared for a storm; but such storms one must not shrink from encountering. That would be cowardice."

It happened that, just in these days, the present writer had frequent opportunities of conversing with Ibsen, and of hearing from his own lips almost all the views expressed in the above extracts. He was especially emphatic, I remember, in protesting against the notion that the opinions expressed by Mrs. Alving of Oswald were to be attributed to himself. He insisted, on the contrary, that Mrs. Alving's views were merely typical of the moral chaos inevitably produced by reaction from the narrow conventionalism represented by Manders.

With one consent, the leading theatres of the three Scandinavian capitals declined to have anything to do with the play. It was more than eighteen months old before it found its way to the stage at all. In August 1883 it was acted for the first time at Helsingborg, Sweden, by a travelling company under the direction of an eminent Swedish actor, August Lindberg, who himself played Oswald. He took it on tour round the principal cities of Scandinavia, playing it, among the rest, at a minor theatre in Christiania. It happened that the boards of the Christiania Theatre were at the same time occupied by a French farce; and public demonstrations of protest were made against the managerial policy which gave *Tête de Linotte* the preference over *Gengangere*. Gradually the prejudice against the play broke down. Already in the autumn of 1883 it was produced at the Royal (Dramatiska) Theatre in Stockholm. When the new National Theatre was opened in Christiania in 1899, *Gengangere* found an early place in its repertory; and even the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen has since opened its doors to the tragedy.

Not until April 1886 was *Gespenster* acted in Germany, and then only at a private performance, at the Stadttheater, Augsburg, the poet himself being present. In the following winter it was acted at the famous Court Theatre at Meiningen, again in the presence of the poet. The first (private) performance in Berlin took place on January 9, 1887, at the Residenz Theater; and when the Freie Bühne, founded on the model of the Paris Théâtre-Libre, began its operations two years later (September 29, 1889), *Gespenster* was the first play that it produced. The Freie

Bühne gave the initial impulse to the whole modern movement which has given Germany a new dramatic literature; and the leaders of the movement, whether authors or critics, were one and all ardent disciples of Ibsen, regarding *Gespenster* as his typical masterpiece. In Germany, then, the play certainly did, in Ibsen's own words, "move some boundary-posts." The Prussian censorship presently withdrew its veto, and on November 27, 1894, the two leading literary theatres of Berlin, the Deutsches Theater and the Lessing Theater, gave simultaneous performances of the tragedy. Everywhere in Germany and Austria it is now freely performed; but it is naturally one of the least popular of Ibsen's plays.

It was with *Les Revenants* that Ibsen made his first appearance on the French stage. The play was produced by the Théâtre-Libre (at the Théâtre des Menus-Plaisirs) on May 29, 1890. Here, again, it became the watchword of the new school of authors and critics, and aroused a good deal of opposition among the old school. But the most hostile French criticisms were moderation itself compared with the torrents of abuse which were poured upon *Ghosts* by the journalists of London when, on March 13, 1891, the Independent Theatre, under the direction of Mr. J. T. Grein, gave a private performance of the play at the Royalty Theatre, Soho. I have elsewhere[1] placed upon record some of the amazing feats of vituperation achieved of the critics, and will not here recall them. It is sufficient to say that if the play had been a

[1] See "The Mausoleum of Ibsen," *Fortnightly Review*, August 1893. See also Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 89, and my introduction to *Ghosts* in the single-volume edition.

tenth part as nauseous as the epithets hurled at it and its author, the Censor's veto would have been amply justified. That veto is still (1911) in force. England enjoys the proud distinction of being the one country in the world where *Ghosts* may not be publicly acted.

In the United States, the first performance of the play in English took place at the Berkeley Lyceum, New York City, on January 5, 1894. The production was described by Mr. W. D. Howells as "a great theatrical event—the very greatest I have ever known." Other leading men of letters were equally impressed by it. Five years later, a second production took place at the Carnegie Lyceum; and an adventurous manager has even taken the play on tour in the United States. The Italian version of the tragedy, *Gli Spettri*, has ever since 1892 held a prominent place in the repertory of the great actors Zaccone and Novelli, who have acted it, not only throughout Italy, but in Austria, Germany, Russia, Spain, and South America.

In an interview, published immediately after Ibsen's death, Björnstjerne Björnson, questioned as to what he held to be his brother-poet's greatest work, replied, without a moment's hesitation, *Gengangere*. This dictum can scarcely, I think, be accepted without some qualification. Even confining our attention to the modern plays, and leaving out of comparison *The Pretenders*, *Brand*, and *Peer Gynt*, we can scarcely call *Ghosts* Ibsen's richest or most human play, and certainly not his profoundest or most poetical. If some omnipotent Censorship decreed the annihilation of all his works save one, few people, I imagine, would vote that that one should be

Ghosts. Even if half a dozen works were to be saved from the wreck, I doubt whether I, for my part, would include *Ghosts* in the list. It is, in my judgment, a little bare, hard, austere. It is the first work in which Ibsen applies his new technical method—evolved, as I have suggested, during the composition of *A Doll's House*—and he applies it with something of fanaticism. He is under the sway of a prosaic ideal—confessed in the phrase, "My object was to make the reader feel that he was going through a piece of real experience"—and he is putting some constraint upon the poet within him. The action moves a little stiffly, and all in one rhythm. It lacks variety and suppleness. Moreover, the play affords some slight excuse for the criticism which persists in regarding Ibsen as a preacher rather than as a creator—an author who cares more for ideas and doctrines than for human beings. Though Mrs. Alving, Engstrand and Regina are rounded and breathing characters, it cannot be denied that Manders strikes one as a clerical type rather than an individual, while even Oswald might not quite unfairly be described as simply and solely his father's son, an object-lesson in heredity. We cannot be said to know him, individually and intimately, as we know Helmer or Stockmann, Hialmar Ekdal or Gregers Werle. Then, again, there are one or two curious flaws in the play. The question whether Oswald's "case" is one which actually presents itself in the medical books seems to me of very trifling moment. It is typically true, even if it be not true in detail. The suddenness of the catastrophe may possibly be exaggerated, its premonitions, and even its essential nature, may be misdescribed. On the

other hand, I conceive it probable that the poet had documents to found upon, which may be unknown to his critics. I have never taken any pains to satisfy myself upon the point, which seems to me quite immaterial. There is not the slightest doubt that the life-history of a Captain Alving may, and often does, entail upon posterity consequences quite as tragic as those which ensue in Oswald's case, and far more wide-spreading. That being so, the artistic justification of the poet's presentment of the case is certainly not dependent on its absolute scientific accuracy. The flaws above alluded to are of another nature. One of them is the prominence given to the fact that the Asylum is uninsured. No doubt there is some symbolical purport in the circumstance; but I cannot think that it is either sufficiently clear or sufficiently important to justify the emphasis thrown upon it at the end of the second act. Another dubious point is Oswald's argument in the first act as to the expensiveness of marriage as compared with free union. Since the parties to free union, as he describes it, accept all the responsibilities of marriage, and only pretermit the ceremony, the difference of expense, one would suppose, must be neither more nor less than the actual marriage fee. I have never seen this remark of Oswald's adequately explained, either as a matter of economic fact, or as a trait of character. Another blemish, of somewhat greater moment, is the inconceivable facility with which, in the third act, Manders suffers himself to be victimized by Engstrand. All these little things, taken together, detract, as it seems to me, from the artistic completeness of the play, and impair its claim to rank as the poet's masterpiece. Even in prose

drama, his greatest and most consummate achievements were yet to come.

Must we, then, wholly dissent from Björnson's judgment? I think not. In a historical, if not in an æsthetic, sense, *Ghosts* may well rank as Ibsen's greatest work. It was the play which first gave the full measure of his technical and spiritual originality and daring. It has done far more than any other of his plays to "move boundary-posts." It has advanced the frontiers of dramatic art and implanted new ideals, both technical and intellectual, in the minds of a whole generation of playwrights. It ranks with *Hernani* and *La Dame aux Camélias* among the epoch-making plays of the nineteenth century, while in point of essential originality it towers above them. We cannot, I think, get nearer to the truth than George Brandes did in the above-quoted phrase from his first notice of the play, describing it as not, perhaps, the poet's greatest work, but certainly his noblest deed. In another essay, Brandes has pointed to it, with equal justice, as marking Ibsen's final breach with his early—one might almost say his hereditary—romanticism. He here becomes, at last, "the most modern of the moderns." "This, I am convinced," says the Danish critic, "is his imperishable glory, and will give lasting life to his works."

GHOSTS
(1881)

CHARACTERS

MRS. HELEN ALVING, *widow of Captain Alving, late Chamberlain*[1] *to the King.*
OSWALD ALVING, *her son, a painter.*
PASTOR MANDERS.
JACOB ENGSTRAND, *a carpenter.*
REGINA ENGSTRAND, *Mrs. Alving's maid.*

The action takes place at Mrs. Alving's country house, beside one of the large fjords in Western Norway.

[1] Chamberlain (Kammerherre) is the only title of honour now existing in Norway. It is a distinction conferred by the King on men of wealth and position, and is not hereditary.

GHOSTS

A FAMILY-DRAMA IN THREE ACTS

ACT FIRST

A spacious garden-room, with one door to the left, and two doors to the right. In the middle of the room a round table, with chairs about it. On the table lie books, periodicals, and newspapers. In the foreground to the left a window, and by it a small sofa, with a work-table in front of it. In the background, the room is continued into a somewhat narrower conservatory, the walls of which are formed by large panes of glass. In the right-hand wall of the conservatory is a door leading down into the garden. Through the glass wall a gloomy fjord-landscape is faintly visible, veiled by steady rain.

ENGSTRAND, *the carpenter, stands by the garden door. His left leg is somewhat bent; he has a clump of wood under the sole of his boot.* REGINA, *with an empty garden syringe in her hand, hinders him from advancing.*

REGINA.

[*In a low voice.*] What do you want? Stop where you are. You're positively dripping.

ENGSTRAND.

It's the Lord's own rain, my girl.

REGINA.

It's the devil's rain, *I* say.

ENGSTRAND.

Lord, how you talk, Regina. [*Limps a step or two forward into the room.*] It's just this as I wanted to say——

REGINA.

Don't clatter so with that foot of yours, I tell you! The young master's asleep upstairs.

ENGSTRAND.

Asleep? In the middle of the day?

REGINA.

It's no business of yours.

ENGSTRAND.

I was out on the loose last night——

REGINA.

I can quite believe that.

ENGSTRAND.

Yes, we're weak vessels, we poor mortals, my girl——

REGINA.

So it seems.

ENGSTRAND.

——and temptations are manifold in this world, you see. But all the same, I was hard at work, God knows, at half-past five this morning.

REGINA.

Very well; only be off now. I won't stop here and have *rendezvous's*[1] with you.

ENGSTRAND.

What do you say you won't have?

REGINA.

I won't have any one find you here; so just you go about your business.

ENGSTRAND.

[*Advances a step or two.*] Blest if I go before I've had a talk with you. This afternoon I shall have finished my work at the school-house, and then I shall take to-night's boat and be off home to the town.

REGINA.

[*Mutters.*] Pleasant journey to you!

ENGSTRAND.

Thank you, my child. To-morrow the Orphanage is to be opened, and then there'll be fine doings, no doubt, and plenty of intoxicating drink going, you know. And nobody shall say of Jacob Engstrand that he can't keep out of temptation's way.

REGINA.

Oh!

[1] This and other French words used by Regina are in that language in the original.

ENGSTRAND.

You see, there's to be heaps of grand folks here to-morrow. Pastor Manders is expected from town, too.

REGINA.

He's coming to-day.

ENGSTRAND.

There, you see! And I should be cursedly sorry if he found out anything against me, don't you understand?

REGINA.

Oho! is that your game?

ENGSTRAND.

Is what my game?

REGINA.

[*Looking hard at him.*] What are you going to fool Pastor Manders into doing, this time?

ENGSTRAND.

Sh! sh! Are you crazy? Do *I* want to fool Pastor Manders? Oh, no! Pastor Manders has been far too good a friend to me for that. But I just wanted to say, you know—that I mean to be off home again to-night.

REGINA.

The sooner the better, say I.

ENGSTRAND.

Yes, but I want you with me, Regina.

REGINA.

[*Open-mouthed.*] You want me——? What are you talking about?

ENGSTRAND.

I want you to come home with me, I say.

REGINA.

[*Scornfully.*] Never in this world shall you get me home with you.

ENGSTRAND.

Oh, we'll see about that.

REGINA.

Yes, you may be sure we'll see about it! Me, that have been brought up by a lady like Mrs. Alving! Me, that am treated almost as a daughter here! Is it m e you want to go home with you?—to a house like yours? For shame!

ENGSTRAND.

What the devil do you mean? Do you set yourself up against your father, you hussy?

REGINA.

[*Mutters without looking at him.*] You've said often enough I was no concern of yours.

ENGSTRAND.

Pooh! Why should you bother about t h a t ——

REGINA.

Haven't you many a time sworn at me and called me a — ? *Fi donc!*

ENGSTRAND.

Curse me, now, if ever I used such an ugly word.

REGINA.

Oh, I remember very well what word you used.

ENGSTRAND.

Well, but that was only when I was a bit on, don't you know? Temptations are manifold in this world, Regina.

REGINA.

Ugh!

ENGSTRAND.

And besides, it was when your mother was that aggravating—I had to find something to twit her with, my child. She was always setting up for a fine lady. [*Mimics.*] "Let me go, Engstrand; let me be. Remember I was three years in Chamberlain Alving's family at Rosenvold." [*Laughs.*] Mercy on us! She could never forget that the Captain was made a Chamberlain while she was in service here.

REGINA.

Poor mother! you very soon tormented her into her grave.

ENGSTRAND.

[*With a twist of his shoulders.*] Oh, of course! I'm to have the blame for everything.

REGINA.

[*Turns away; half aloud.*] Ugh——! And that leg too!

ENGSTRAND.

What do you say, my child?

REGINA.

Pied de mouton.

ENGSTRAND.

Is that English, eh?

REGINA.

Yes.

ENGSTRAND.

Ay, ay; you've picked up some learning out here; and that may come in useful now, Regina.

REGINA.

[*After a short silence.*] What do you want with me in town?

ENGSTRAND.

Can you ask what a father wants with his only child? A'n't I a lonely, forlorn widower?

REGINA.

Oh, don't try on any nonsense like that with m e! Why do you want me?

ENGSTRAND.

Well, let me tell you, I've been thinking of setting up in a new line of business.

REGINA.

[*Contemptuously.*] You've tried that often enough, and much good you've done with it.

ENGSTRAND.

Yes, but this time you shall see, Regina! Devil take me——

REGINA.

[*Stamps.*] Stop your swearing!

ENGSTRAND.

Hush, hush; you're right enough there, my girl. What I wanted to say was just this—I've laid by a very tidy pile from this Orphanage job.

REGINA.

Have you? That's a good thing for you.

ENGSTRAND.

What can a man spend his ha'pence on here in this country hole?

REGINA.

Well, what then?

ENGSTRAND.

Why, you see, I thought of putting the money into some paying speculation. I thought of a sort of a sailor's tavern——

REGINA.

Pah!

ENGSTRAND.

A regular high-class affair, of course; not any sort of pig-sty for common sailors. No! damn it! it would be for captains and mates, and—and—regular swells, you know.

REGINA.

And I was to——?

ENGSTRAND.

You were to help, to be sure. Only for the look of the thing, you understand. Devil a bit of hard work shall you have, my girl. You shall do exactly what you like.

REGINA.

Oh, indeed!

ENGSTRAND.

But there must be a petticoat in the house; that's as clear as daylight. For I want to have it a bit lively-like in the evenings, with singing and dancing, and so on. You must remember they're weary wanderers on the ocean of life. [*Nearer.*] Now don't be a fool and stand in your own light, Regina. What's to become of you out here? Your mistress has given you a lot of learning; but what good is t h a t to you? You're to look after the children at the new Orphanage, I hear. Is t h a t the sort of thing for you, eh? Are you so dead set on wearing your life out for a pack of dirty brats?

REGINA.

No; if things go as I want them to—— Well there's no saying—there's no saying.

ENGSTRAND.

What do you mean by "there's no saying"?

REGINA.

Never you mind.—How much money have you saved?

ENGSTRAND.

What with one thing and another, a matter of seven or eight hundred crowns.[1]

REGINA.

That's not so bad.

ENGSTRAND.

It's enough to make a start with, my girl.

REGINA.

Aren't you thinking of giving me any?

ENGSTRAND.

No, I'm blest if I am!

REGINA.

Not even of sending me a scrap of stuff for a new dress?

ENGSTRAND.

Come to town with me, my lass, and you'll soon get dresses enough.

REGINA.

Pooh! I can do that on my own account, if I want to.

[1] A "krone" is equal to one shilling and three-halfpence.

ENGSTRAND.

No, a father's guiding hand is what you want, Regina. Now, I've got my eye on a capital house in Little Harbour Street. They don't want much ready-money; and it could be a sort of a Sailors' Home, you know.

REGINA.

But I will n o t live with you! I have nothing whatever to do with you. Be off!

ENGSTRAND.

You wouldn't stop long with me, my girl. No such luck! If you knew how to play your cards, such a fine figure of a girl as you've grown in the last year or two——

REGINA.

Well?

ENGSTRAND.

You'd soon get hold of some mate—or maybe even a captain——

REGINA.

I won't marry any one of that sort. Sailors have no *savoir vivre*.

ENGSTRAND.

What's that they haven't got?

REGINA.

I know what sailors are, I tell you. They're not the sort of people to marry.

ENGSTRAND.

Then never mind about marrying them. You can make it pay all the same. [*More confidentially.*] He—the Englishman—the man with the yacht—he came down with three hundred dollars, he did; and she wasn't a bit handsomer than you.

REGINA.

[*Making for him.*] Out you go!

ENGSTRAND.

[*Falling back.*] Come, come! You're not going to hit me, I hope.

REGINA.

Yes, if you begin talking about mother I shall hit you. Get away with you, I say! [*Drives him back towards the garden door.*] And don't slam the doors. Young Mr. Alving——

ENGSTRAND.

He's asleep; I know. You're mightily taken up about young Mr. Alving—— [*More softly.*] Oho! you don't mean to say it's h i m as——?

REGINA.

Be off this minute! You're crazy, I tell you! No, not that way. There comes Pastor Manders. Down the kitchen stairs with you.

ENGSTRAND.

[*Towards the right.*] Yes, yes, I'm going. But just you talk to him as is coming there. H e ' s the man to

tell you what a child owes its father. For I a m your father all the same, you know. I can prove it from the church register.

[*He goes out through the second door to the right, which* REGINA *has opened, and closes again after him.* REGINA *glances hastily at herself in the mirror, dusts herself with her pocket handkerchief, and settles her necktie; then she busies herself with the flowers.*

PASTOR MANDERS, *wearing an overcoat, carrying an umbrella, and with a small travelling-bag on a strap over his shoulder, comes through the garden door into the conservatory.*

MANDERS.

Good-morning, Miss Engstrand.

REGINA.

[*Turning round, surprised and pleased.*] No, really! Good-morning, Pastor Manders. Is the steamer in already?

MANDERS.

It is just in. [*Enters the sitting-room.*] Terrible weather we have been having lately.

REGINA.

[*Follows him.*] It's such blessëd weather for the country, sir.

MANDERS.

No doubt; you are quite right. We townspeople give too little thought to that.

[*He begins to take off his overcoat.*

REGINA.

Oh, mayn't I help you?—There! Why, how wet it is! I'll just hang it up in the hall. And your umbrella, too—I'll open it and let it dry.

[*She goes out with the things through the second door on the right.* PASTOR MANDERS *takes off his travelling-bag and lays it and his hat on a chair. Meanwhile* REGINA *comes in again.*

MANDERS.

Ah, it's a comfort to get safe under cover. I hope everything is going on well here?

REGINA.

Yes, thank you, sir.

MANDERS.

You have your hands full, I suppose, in preparation for to-morrow?

REGINA.

Yes, there's plenty to do, of course.

MANDERS.

And Mrs. Alving is at home, I trust?

REGINA.

Oh dear, yes. She's just upstairs, looking after the young master's chocolate.

MANDERS.

Yes, by-the-bye—I heard down at the pier that Oswald had arrived.

REGINA.

Yes, he came the day before yesterday. We didn't expect him before to-day.

MANDERS.

Quite strong and well, I hope?

REGINA.

Yes, thank you, quite; but dreadfully tired with the journey. He has made one rush right through from Paris—the whole way in one train, I believe. He's sleeping a little now, I think; so perhaps we'd better talk a little quietly.

MANDERS.

Sh!—as quietly as you please.

REGINA.

[*Arranging an arm-chair beside the table.*] Now, do sit down, Pastor Manders, and make yourself comfortable. [*He sits down; she places a footstool under his feet.*] There! Are you comfortable now, sir?

MANDERS.

Thanks, thanks, extremely so. [*Looks at her.*] Do you know, Miss Engstrand, I positively believe you have grown since I last saw you.

REGINA.

Do you think so, sir? Mrs. Alving says I've filled out too.

MANDERS.

Filled out? Well, perhaps a little; just enough.

[*Short pause.*

REGINA.

Shall I tell Mrs. Alving you are here?

MANDERS.

Thanks, thanks, there is no hurry, my dear child.—By-the-bye, Regina, my good girl, tell me: how is your father getting on out here?

REGINA.

Oh, thank you, sir, he's getting on well enough.

MANDERS.

He called upon me last time he was in town.

REGINA.

Did he, indeed? He's always so glad of a chance of talking to you, sir.

MANDERS.

And you often look in upon him at his work, I daresay?

REGINA.

I? Oh, of course, when I have time, I——

MANDERS.

Your father is not a man of strong character, Miss Engstrand. He stands terribly in need of a guiding hand.

REGINA.

Oh, yes; I daresay he does.

MANDERS.

He requires some one near him whom he cares for, and whose judgment he respects. He frankly admitted as much when he last came to see me.

REGINA.

Yes, he mentioned something of the sort to me. But I don't know whether Mrs. Alving can spare me; especially now that we've got the new Orphanage to attend to. And then I should be so sorry to leave Mrs. Alving; she has always been so kind to me.

MANDERS.

But a daughter's duty, my good girl—— Of course, we should first have to get your mistress's consent.

REGINA.

But I don't know whether it would be quite proper for me, at my age, to keep house for a single man.

MANDERS.

What! My dear Miss Engstrand! When the man is your own father!

REGINA.

Yes, that may be; but all the same—— Now, if it were in a thoroughly n i c e house, and with a real gentleman——

MANDERS.

Why, my dear Regina——

REGINA.

——one I could love and respect, and be a daughter to——

MANDERS.

Yes, but my dear, good child——

REGINA.

Then I should be glad to go to town. It's very lonely out here; you know yourself, sir, what it is to be alone in the world. And I can assure you I'm both quick and willing. Don't you know of any such place for me, sir?

MANDERS.

I? No, certainly not.

REGINA.

But, dear, dear sir, do remember me if——

MANDERS.

[*Rising.*] Yes, yes, certainly, Miss Engstrand.

REGINA.

For if I——

MANDERS.

Will you be so good as to tell your mistress I am here?

REGINA.

I will, at once, sir. [*She goes out to the left.*

MANDERS.

[*Paces the room two or three times, stands a moment in the background with his hands behind his back, and looks out over the garden. Then he returns to the table, takes up a book, and looks at the title-page; starts, and looks at several books.*] Ha—indeed!

MRS. ALVING *enters by the door on the left; she is followed by* REGINA, *who immediately goes out by the first door on the right.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Holds out her hand.*] Welcome, my dear Pastor.

MANDERS.

How do you do, Mrs. Alving? Here I am as I promised.

MRS. ALVING.

Always punctual to the minute.

MANDERS.

You may believe it was not so easy for me to get away. With all the Boards and Committees I belong to——

MRS. ALVING.

That makes it all the kinder of you to come so early. Now we can get through our business before dinner. But where is your portmanteau?

MANDERS.

[*Quickly.*] I left it down at the inn. I shall sleep there to-night.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Suppressing a smile.*] Are you really not to be persuaded, even now, to pass the night under my roof?

MANDERS.

No, no, Mrs. Alving; many thanks. I shall stay at the inn, as usual. It is so conveniently near the landing-stage.

MRS. ALVING.

Well, you must have your own way. But I really should have thought we two old people——

MANDERS.

Now you are making fun of me. Ah, you're naturally in great spirits to-day—what with to-morrow's festival and Oswald's return.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes; you can think what a delight it is to me! It's more than two years since he was home last. And now he has promised to stay with me all the winter.

MANDERS.

Has he really? That is very nice and dutiful of him. For I can well believe that life in Rome and Paris has very different attractions from any we can offer here.

MRS. ALVING.

Ah, but here he has his mother, you see. My own darling boy—he hasn't forgotten his old mother!

MANDERS.

It would be grievous indeed, if absence and absorption in art and that sort of thing were to blunt his natural feelings.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, you may well say so. But there's nothing of that sort to fear with him. I'm quite curious to see whether you know him again. He'll be down presently; he's upstairs just now, resting a little on the sofa. But do sit down, my dear Pastor.

MANDERS.

Thank you. Are you quite at liberty——?

MRS. ALVING.

Certainly. [*She sits by the table.*

MANDERS.

Very well. Then let me show you—— [*He goes to the chair where his travelling-bag lies, takes out a packet of papers, sits down on the opposite side of the table, and tries to find a clear space for the papers.*] Now, to begin with, here is—— [*Breaking off.*] Tell me, Mrs. Alving, how do these books come to be here?

MRS. ALVING.

These books? They are books I am reading.

MANDERS.

Do you read this sort of literature?

MRS. ALVING.

Certainly I do.

MANDERS.

Do you feel better or happier for such reading?

MRS. ALVING.

I feel, so to speak, more secure.

MANDERS.

That is strange. How do you mean?

MRS. ALVING.

Well, I seem to find explanation and confirmation of all sorts of things I myself have been thinking. For that is the wonderful part of it, Pastor Manders—there is really nothing new in these books, nothing but what most people think and believe. Only most people either don't formulate it to themselves, or else keep quiet about it.

MANDERS.

Great heavens! Do you really believe that most people——?

MRS. ALVING.

I do, indeed.

MANDERS.

But surely not in this country? Not here among us?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, certainly; here as elsewhere.

MANDERS.

Well, I really must say——!

MRS. ALVING.

For the rest, what do you object to in these books?

MANDERS.

Object to in them? You surely do not suppose that I have nothing better to do than to study such publications as these?

MRS. ALVING.

That is to say, you know nothing of what you are condemning?

MANDERS.

I have read enough about these writings to disapprove of them.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes; but your own judgment——

MANDERS.

My dear Mrs. Alving, there are many occasions in life when one must rely upon others. Things are so ordered in this world; and it is well that they are. Otherwise, what would become of society?

MRS. ALVING.

Well, well, I daresay you're right there.

MANDERS.

Besides, I of course do not deny that there may be much that is attractive in such books. Nor can I blame you for wishing to keep up with the intellectual movements that are said to be going on in the great world—where you have let your son pass so much of his life. But——

MRS. ALVING.

But?

MANDERS.

[*Lowering his voice.*] But one should not talk about it, Mrs. Alving. One is certainly not bound to account to everybody for what one reads and thinks within one's own four walls.

MRS. ALVING.

Of course not; I quite agree with you.

MANDERS.

Only think, now, how you are bound to consider the interests of this Orphanage, which you decided on founding at a time when—if I understand you rightly—you thought very differently on spiritual matters.

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, yes; I quite admit that. But it was about the Orphanage——

MANDERS.

It was about the Orphanage we were to speak; yes. All I say is: prudence, my dear lady! And now let us get to business. [*Opens the packet, and takes out a number of papers.*] Do you see these?

MRS. ALVING.

The documents?

MANDERS.

All—and in perfect order. I can tell you it was hard work to get them in time. I had to put on strong pressure. The authorities are almost morbidly scrupulous when there is any decisive step to be taken. But here they are at last. [*Looks through the bundle.*] See! here is the formal deed of gift of the parcel of ground known as Solvik in the Manor of Rosenvold, with all the newly constructed buildings, schoolrooms, master's house, and chapel. And here is the legal fiat for the endowment and for the Bye-laws of the Institution. Will you look at them? [*Reads.*] "Bye-laws for the Children's Home to be known as 'Captain Alving's Foundation.'"

MRS. ALVING.

[*Looks long at the paper.*] So there it is.

MANDERS.

I have chosen the designation "Captain" rather than "Chamberlain." "Captain" looks less pretentious.

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, yes; just as you think best.

MANDERS.

And here you have the Bank Account of the capital lying at interest to cover the current expenses of the Orphanage.

MRS. ALVING.

Thank you; but please keep it—it will be more convenient.

MANDERS.

With pleasure. I think we will leave the money in the Bank for the present. The interest is certainly not what we could wish—four per cent. and six months' notice of withdrawal. If a good mortgage could be found later on—of course it must be a first mortgage and an unimpeachable security—then we could consider the matter.

MRS. ALVING.

Certainly, my dear Pastor Manders. You are the best judge in these things.

MANDERS.

I will keep my eyes open at any rate.—But now there is one thing more which I have several times been intending to ask you.

MRS. ALVING.

And what is that?

MANDERS.

Shall the Orphanage buildings be insured or not?

MRS. ALVING.

Of course they must be insured.

MANDERS.

Well, wait a moment, Mrs. Alving. Let us look into the matter a little more closely.

MRS. ALVING.

I have everything insured; buildings and movables and stock and crops.

MANDERS.

Of course you have—on your own estate. And so have I—of course. But here, you see, it is quite another matter. The Orphanage is tc be consecrated, as it were, to a higher purpose.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, but that's no reason——

MANDERS.

For my own part, I should certainly not see the smallest impropriety in guarding against all contingencies——

MRS. ALVING.

No, I should think not.

MANDERS.

But what is the general feeling in the neighbourhood? You, of course, know better than I.

MRS. ALVING.

Well—the general feeling——

MANDERS.

Is there any considerable number of people—really responsible people—who might be scandalised?

MRS. ALVING.

What do you mean by "really responsible people"?

MANDERS.

Well, I mean people in such independent and influential positions that one cannot help attaching some weight to their opinions.

MRS. ALVING.

There are several people of that sort here, who would very likely be shocked if——

MANDERS.

There, you see! In town we have many such people. Think of all my colleague's adherents! People would be only too ready to interpret our action as a sign that neither you nor I had the right faith in a Higher Providence.

MRS. ALVING.

But for your own part, my dear Pastor, you can at least tell yourself that——

MANDERS.

Yes, I know—I know; my conscience would be quite easy, that is true enough. But nevertheless we should not escape grave misinterpretation; and that might very likely react unfavourably upon the Orphanage.

MRS. ALVING.

Well, in that case——

MANDERS.

Nor can I entirely lose sight of the difficult—I may even say painful—position in which *I* might perhaps be placed. In the leading circles of the town, people take a lively interest in this Orphanage. It is, of course, founded partly for the benefit of the town, as well; and it is to be hoped it will, to a considerable extent, result in lightening our Poor Rates. Now, as I have been your adviser, and have had the business arrangements in my hands, I cannot but fear that I may have to bear the brunt of fanaticism——

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, you mustn't run the risk of that.

MANDERS.

To say nothing of the attacks that would assuredly be made upon me in certain papers and periodicals, which——

MRS. ALVING.

Enough, my dear Pastor Manders. That consideration is quite decisive.

MANDERS.

Then you do not wish the Orphanage to be insured?

MRS. ALVING.

No. We will let it alone.

MANDERS.

[*Leaning back in his chair.*] But if, now, a disaster were to happen? One can never tell—— Should you be able to make good the damage?

MRS. ALVING.

No; I tell you plainly I should do nothing of the kind.

MANDERS.

Then I must tell you, Mrs. Alving—we are taking no small responsibility upon ourselves.

MRS. ALVING.

Do you think we can do otherwise?

MANDERS.

No, that is just the point; we really cannot do otherwise. We ought not to expose ourselves to misinterpretation; and we have no right whatever to give offence to the weaker brethren.

MRS. ALVING.

You, as a clergyman, certainly should not.

MANDERS.

I really think, too, we may trust that such an institution has fortune on its side; in fact, that it stands under a special providence.

MRS. ALVING.

Let us hope so, Pastor Manders.

MANDERS.

Then we will let it take its chance?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, certainly.

MANDERS.

Very well. So be it. [*Makes a note.*] Then—no insurance.

MRS. ALVING.

It's odd that you should just happen to mention the matter to-day——

MANDERS.

I have often thought of asking you about it——

MRS. ALVING.

——for we very nearly had a fire down there yesterday.

MANDERS.

You don't say so!

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, it was a trifling matter. A heap of shavings had caught fire in the carpenter's workshop.

MANDERS.

Where Engstrand works?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes. They say he's often very careless with matches.

MANDERS.

He has so much on his mind, that man—so many things to fight against. Thank God, he is now striving to lead a decent life, I hear.

MRS. ALVING.

Indeed! Who says so?

MANDERS.

He himself assures me of it. And he is certainly a capital workman.

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, yes; so long as he's sober——

MANDERS.

Ah, that melancholy weakness! But he is often driven to it by his injured leg, he says. Last time he was in town I was really touched by him. He came and thanked me so warmly for having got him work here, so that he might be near Regina.

MRS. ALVING.

He doesn't see much of h e r.

MANDERS.

Oh, yes; he has a talk with her every day. He told me so himself.

MRS. ALVING.

Well, it may be so.

MANDERS.

He feels so acutely that he needs some one to keep a firm hold on him when temptation comes. That is what I cannot help liking about Jacob Engstrand: he comes to you so helplessly, accusing himself and confessing his

own weakness. The last time he was talking to me—— Believe me, Mrs. Alving, supposing it were a real necessity for him to have Regina home again——

MRS. ALVING.

[*Rising hastily.*] Regina!

MANDERS.

——you must not set yourself against it.

MRS. ALVING.

Indeed I s h a l l set myself against it. And besides —Regina is to have a position in the Orphanage.

MANDERS.

But, after all, remember he is her father——

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, I know very well what sort of a father he has been to her. No! She shall never go to him with m y goodwill.

MANDERS.

[*Rising.*] My dear lady, don't take the matter so warmly. You sadly misjudge poor Engstrand. You seem to be quite terrified——

MRS. ALVING.

[*More quietly.*] It makes no difference. I have taken Regina into my house, and there she shall stay. [*Listens.*] Hush, my dear Mr. Manders; say no more about it. [*Her*

face lights up with gladness.] Listen! there is Oswald coming downstairs. Now we'll think of no one but him.

OSWALD ALVING, *in a light overcoat, hat in hand, and smoking a large meerschaum, enters by the door on the left; he stops in the doorway.*

OSWALD.

Oh, I beg your pardon; I thought you were in the study. [*Comes forward.*] Good-morning, Pastor Manders.

MANDERS.

[*Staring.*] Ah——! How strange——!

MRS. ALVING.

Well now, what do you think of him, Mr. Manders?

MANDERS.

I—I—can it really be——?

OSWALD.

Yes, it's really the Prodigal Son, sir.

MANDERS.

[*Protesting.*] My dear young friend——

OSWALD.

Well, then, the Lost Sheep Found.

MRS. ALVING.

Oswald is thinking of the time when you were so much opposed to his becoming a painter.

MANDERS.

To our human eyes many a step seems dubious, which afterwards proves—— [*Wrings his hand.*] But first of all, welcome, welcome home! Do not think, my dear Oswald—I suppose I may call you by your Christian name?

OSWALD.

What else should you call me?

MANDERS.

Very good. What I wanted to say was this, my dear Oswald—you must not think that I utterly condemn the artist's calling. I have no doubt there are many who can keep their inner self unharmed in that profession, as in any other.

OSWALD.

Let us hope so.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Beaming with delight.*] I know one who has kept both his inner and his outer self unharmed. Just look at him, Mr. Manders.

OSWALD.

[*Moves restlessly about the room.*] Yes, yes, my dear mother; let's say no more about it.

MANDERS.

Why, certainly—that is undeniable. And you have begun to make a name for yourself already. The newspapers have often spoken of you, most favourably. Just

lately, by-the-bye, I fancy I haven't seen your name quite so often.

OSWALD.

[*Up in the conservatory.*] I haven't been able to paint so much lately.

MRS. ALVING.

Even a painter needs a little rest now and then.

MANDERS.

No doubt, no doubt. And meanwhile he can be preparing himself and mustering his forces for some great work.

OSWALD.

Yes.—Mother, will dinner soon be ready?

MRS. ALVING.

In less than half an hour. He has a capital appetite, thank God.

MANDERS.

And a taste for tobacco, too.

OSWALD.

I found my father's pipe in my room——

MANDERS.

Aha—then that accounts for it!

MRS. ALVING.

For what?

MANDERS.

When Oswald appeared there, in the doorway, with the pipe in his mouth, I could have sworn I saw his father, large as life.

OSWALD.

No, really?

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, how can you say so? Oswald takes after me.

MANDERS.

Yes, but there is an expression about the corners of the mouth—something about the lips—that reminds one exactly of Alving: at any rate, now that he is smoking.

MRS. ALVING.

Not in the least. Oswald has rather a clerical curve about his mouth, I think.

MANDERS.

Yes, yes; some of my colleagues have much the same expression.

MRS. ALVING.

But put your pipe away, my dear boy; I won't have smoking in here.

OSWALD.

[*Does so.*] By all means. I only wanted to try it; for I once smoked it when I was a child.

MRS. ALVING.

You?

OSWALD.

Yes. I was quite small at the time. I recollect I came up to father's room one evening when he was in great spirits.

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, you can't recollect anything of those times.

OSWALD.

Yes, I recollect it distinctly. He took me on his knee, and gave me the pipe. "Smoke, boy," he said; "smoke away, boy!" And I smoked as hard as I could, until I felt I was growing quite pale, and the perspiration stood in great drops on my forehead. Then he burst out laughing heartily——

MANDERS.

That was most extraordinary.

MRS. ALVING.

My dear friend, it's only something Oswald has dreamt.

OSWALD.

No, mother, I assure you I didn't dream it. For—don't you remember t h i s ?—you came and carried me out into the nursery. Then I was sick, and I saw that you were crying.—Did father often play such practical jokes?

MANDERS.

In his youth he overflowed with the joy of life——

OSWALD.

And yet he managed to do so much in the world; so much that was good and useful; although he died so early.

MANDERS.

Yes, you have inherited the name of an energetic and admirable man, my dear Oswald Alving. No doubt it will be an incentive to you——

OSWALD.

It ought to, indeed.

MANDERS.

It was good of you to come home for the ceremony in his honour.

OSWALD.

I could do no less for my father.

MRS. ALVING.

And I am to keep him so long! That is the best of all.

MANDERS.

You are going to pass the winter at home, I hear.

OSWALD.

My stay is indefinite, sir.—But, ah! it is good to be at home!

MRS. ALVING.

[*Beaming.*] Yes, isn't it, dear?

MANDERS.

[*Looking sympathetically at him.*] You went out into the world early, my dear Oswald.

OSWALD.

I did. I sometimes wonder whether it wasn't too early.

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, not at all. A healthy lad is all the better for it; especially when he's an only child. He oughtn't to hang on at home with his mother and father, and get spoilt.

MANDERS.

That is a very disputable point, Mrs. Alving. A child's proper place is, and must be, the home of his fathers.

OSWALD.

There I quite agree with you, Pastor Manders.

MANDERS.

Only look at your own son—there is no reason why we should not say it in his presence—what has the consequence been for him? He is six or seven and twenty, and has never had the opportunity of learning what a well-ordered home really is.

OSWALD.

I beg your pardon, Pastor; there you're quite mistaken.

MANDERS.

Indeed? I thought you had lived almost exclusively in artistic circles.

OSWALD.

So I have.

MANDERS.

And chiefly among the younger artists?

OSWALD.

Yes, certainly.

MANDERS.

But I thought few of those young fellows could afford to set up house and support a family.

OSWALD.

There are many who cannot afford to marry, sir.

MANDERS.

Yes, that is just what I say.

OSWALD.

But they may have a home for all that. And several of them have, as a matter of fact; and very pleasant, well-ordered homes they are, too.

[MRS. ALVING *follows with breathless interest; nods, but says nothing.*

MANDERS.

But I'm not talking of bachelors' quarters. By a "home" I understand the home of a family, where a man lives with his wife and children.

OSWALD.

Yes; or with his children and his children's mother.

MANDERS.

[*Starts; clasps his hands.*] But, good heavens——

OSWALD.

Well?

MANDERS.

Lives with—his children's mother!

OSWALD.

Yes. Would you have him turn his children's mother out of doors?

MANDERS.

Then it is illicit relations you are talking of! Irregular mariages, as people call them!

OSWALD.

I have never noticed anything particularly irregular about the life these people lead.

MANDERS.

But how is it possible that a—a young man or young woman with any decency of feeling can endure to live in that way?—in the eyes of all the world!

OSWALD.

What are they to do? A poor young artist—a poor girl—marriage costs a great deal. What are they to do?

MANDERS.

What are they to do? Let me tell you, Mr. Alving, what they ought to do. They ought to exercise self-restraint from the first; that is what they ought to do.

OSWALD.

That doctrine will scarcely go down with warm-blooded young people who love each other.

MRS. ALVING.

No, scarcely!

MANDERS.

[*Continuing.*] How can the authorities tolerate such things! Allow them to go on in the light of day! [*Confronting* MRS. ALVING.] Had I not cause to be deeply concerned about your son? In circles where open immorality prevails, and has even a sort of recognised position——!

OSWALD.

Let me tell you, sir, that I have been in the habit of spending nearly all my Sundays in one or two such irregular homes——

MANDERS.

Sundays of all days!

OSWALD.

Isn't that the day to enjoy one's self? Well, never have I heard an offensive word, and still less have I witnessed anything that could be called immoral. No; do you know when and where I have come across immorality in artistic circles?

MANDERS.

No, thank heaven, I don't!

OSWALD.

Well, then, allow me to inform you. I have met with it when one or other of our pattern husbands and fathers has come to Paris to have a look round on his own account, and has done the artists the honour of visiting their humble haunts. They knew what was what. These gentlemen could tell us all about places and things we had never dreamt of.

MANDERS.

What! Do you mean to say that respectable men from home here would——?

OSWALD.

Have you never heard these respectable men, when they got home again, talking about the way in which immorality runs rampant abroad?

MANDERS.

Yes, no doubt——

MRS. ALVING.

I have too.

OSWALD.

Well, you may take their word for it. They know what they are talking about! [*Presses his hands to his head.*] Oh! that that great, free, glorious life out there should be defiled in such a way!

MRS. ALVING.

You mustn't get excited, Oswald. It's not good for you.

OSWALD.

Yes; you're quite right, mother. It's bad for me, I know. You see, I'm wretchedly worn out. I shall go for a little turn before dinner. Excuse me, Pastor: I know you can't take my point of view; but I couldn't help speaking out.

[*He goes out by the second door to the right.*

MRS. ALVING.

My poor boy!

MANDERS.

You may well say so. Then this is what he has come to! [MRS. ALVING *looks at him silently.*

MANDERS.

[*Walking up and down.*] He called himself the Prodigal Son. Alas! alas!

[MRS. ALVING *continues looking at him.*

MANDERS.

And what do y o u say to all this?

MRS. ALVING.

I say that Oswald was right in every word.

MANDERS.

[*Stands still.*] Right? Right! In such principles?

MRS. ALVING.

Here, in my loneliness, I have come to the same way of thinking, Pastor Manders. But I have never dared to say anything. Well! now my boy shall speak for me.

MANDERS.

You are greatly to be pitied, Mrs. Alving. But now I must speak seriously to you. And now it is no longer your business manager and adviser, your own and your husband's early friend, who stands before you. It is the priest—the priest who stood before you in the moment of your life when you had gone farthest astray.

MRS. ALVING.

And what has the priest to say to me?

MANDERS.

I will first stir up your memory a little. The moment is well chosen. To-morrow will be the tenth anniversary of your husband's death. To-morrow the memorial in his honour will be unveiled. To-morrow I shall have to speak to the whole assembled multitude. But to-day I will speak to you alone.

MRS. ALVING.

Very well, Pastor Manders. Speak.

MANDERS.

Do you remember that after less than a year of married life you stood on the verge of an abyss? That you forsook your house and home? That you fled from your

husband? Yes, Mrs. Alving—fled, fled, and refused to return to him, however much he begged and prayed you?

MRS. ALVING.

Have you forgotten how infinitely miserable I was in that first year?

MANDERS.

It is the very mark of the spirit of rebellion to crave for happiness in this life. What right have we human beings to happiness? We have simply to do our duty, Mrs. Alving! And your duty was to hold firmly to the man you had once chosen, and to whom you were bound by the holiest ties.

MRS. ALVING.

You know very well what sort of life Alving was leading—what excesses he was guilty of.

MANDERS.

I know very well what rumours there were about him; and I am the last to approve the life he led in his young days, if report did not wrong him. But a wife is not appointed to be her husband's judge. It was your duty to bear with humility the cross which a Higher Power had, in its wisdom, laid upon you. But instead of that you rebelliously throw away the cross, desert the backslider whom you should have supported, go and risk your good name and reputation, and—nearly succeed in ruining other people's reputation into the bargain.

MRS. ALVING.

Other people's? One other person's, you mean.

MANDERS.

It was incredibly reckless of you to seek refuge with me.

MRS. ALVING.

With our clergyman? With our intimate friend?

MANDERS.

Just on that account. Yes, you may thank God that I possessed the necessary firmness; that I succeeded in dissuading you from your wild designs; and that it was vouchsafed me to lead you back to the path of duty, and home to your lawful husband.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, Pastor Manders, t h a t was certainly your work.

MANDERS.

I was but a poor instrument in a Higher Hand. And what a blessing has it not proved to you, all the days of your life, that I induced you to resume the yoke of duty and obedience! Did not everything happen as I foretold? Did not Alving turn his back on his errors, as a man should? Did he not live with you from that time, lovingly and blamelessly, all his days? Did he not become a benefactor to the whole district? And did he not help you to rise to his own level, so that you, little by little, became his assistant in all his undertakings? And a capital assistant, too—oh, I know, Mrs. Alving, t h a t praise is due to you.—But now I come to the next great error in your life.

MRS. ALVING.

What do you mean?

MANDERS.

Just as you once disowned a wife's duty, so you have since disowned a mother's.

MRS. ALVING.

Ah——!

MANDERS.

You have been all your life under the dominion of a pestilent spirit of self-will. The whole bias of your mind has been towards insubordination and lawlessness. You have never known how to endure any bond. Everything that has weighed upon you in life you have cast away without care or conscience, like a burden you were free to throw off at will. It did not please you to be a wife any longer, and you left your husband. You found it troublesome to be a mother, and you sent your child forth among strangers.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, that is true. I did so.

MANDERS.

And thus you have become a stranger to him.

MRS. ALVING.

No! no! I am not.

MANDERS.

Yes, you are; you m u s t be. And in what state of mind has he returned to you? Bethink yourself well,

Mrs. Alving. You sinned greatly against your husband; —that you recognise by raising yonder memorial to him. Recognise now, also, how you have sinned against your son—there may yet be time to lead him back from the paths of error. Turn back yourself, and save what may yet be saved in him. For [*With uplifted forefinger*] verily, Mrs. Alving, you are a guilt-laden mother!—This I have thought it my duty to say to you. [*Silence.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Slowly and with self-control.*] You have now spoken out, Pastor Manders; and to-morrow you are to speak publicly in memory of my husband. I shall not speak to-morrow. But now I will speak frankly to you, as you have spoken to me.

MANDERS.

To be sure; you will plead excuses for your conduct— –

MRS. ALVING.

No. I will only tell you a story.

MANDERS.

Well——?

MRS. ALVING.

All that you have just said about my husband and me, and our life after you had brought me back to the path of duty—as you called it—about all that you know nothing from personal observation. From that moment you, who had been our intimate friend, never set foot in our house again.

MANDERS.

You and your husband left the town immediately after.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes; and in my husband's lifetime you never came to see us. It was business that forced you to visit me when you undertook the affairs of the Orphanage.

MANDERS.

[*Softly and hesitatingly.*] Helen—if that is meant as a reproach, I would beg you to bear in mind——

MRS. ALVING.

——the regard you owed to your position, yes; and that I was a runaway wife. One can never be too cautious with such unprincipled creatures.

MANDERS.

My dear—Mrs. Alving, you know that is an absurd exaggeration——

MRS. ALVING.

Well well, suppose it is. My point is that your judgment as to my married life is founded upon nothing but common knowledge and report.

MANDERS.

I admit that. What then?

MRS. ALVING.

Well, then, Pastor Manders—I will tell you the truth. I have sworn to myself that one day you should know it—you alone!

MANDERS.

What is the truth, then?

MRS. ALVING.

The truth is that my husband died just as dissolute as he had lived all his days.

MANDERS.

[*Feeling after a chair.*] What do you say?

MRS. ALVING.

After nineteen years of marriage, as dissolute—in his desires at any rate—as he was before you married us.

MANDERS.

And those—those wild oats—those irregularities—those excesses, if you like—you call "a dissolute life"?

MRS. ALVING.

Our doctor used the expression.

MANDERS.

I do not understand you.

MRS. ALVING.

You need not.

MANDERS.

It almost makes me dizzy. Your whole married life, the seeming union of all these years, was nothing more than a hidden abyss!

MRS. ALVING.

Neither more nor less. Now you know it.

MANDERS.

This is—this is inconceivable to me. I cannot grasp it! I cannot realise it! But how was it possible to——? How could such a state of things be kept secret?

MRS. ALVING.

That has been my ceaseless struggle, day after day. After Oswald's birth, I thought Alving seemed to be a little better. But it did not last long. And then I had to struggle twice as hard, fighting as though for life or death, so that nobody should know what sort of man my child's father was. And you know what power Alving had of winning people's hearts. Nobody seemed able to believe anything but good of him. He was one of those people whose life does not bite upon their reputation. But at last, Mr. Manders—for you must know the whole story—the most repulsive thing of all happened.

MANDERS.

More repulsive than what you have told me!

MRS. ALVING.

I had gone on bearing with him, although I knew very well the secrets of his life out of doors. But when he brought the scandal within our own walls——

MANDERS.

Impossible! Here!

MRS. ALVING.

Yes; here in our own home. It was there [*Pointing towards the first door on the right*], in the dining-room, that I first came to know of it. I was busy with something in there, and the door was standing ajar. I heard our housemaid come up from the garden, with water for those flowers.

MANDERS.

Well——?

MRS. ALVING.

Soon after, I heard Alving come in too. I heard him say something softly to her. And then I heard—[*With a short laugh*]—oh! it still sounds in my ears, so hateful and yet so ludicrous—I heard my own servant-maid whisper, "Let me go, Mr. Alving! Let me be!"

MANDERS.

What unseemly levity on his part! But it cannot have been more than levity, Mrs. Alving; believe me, it cannot.

MRS. ALVING.

I soon knew what to believe. Mr. Alving had his way with the girl; and that connection had consequences, Mr. Manders.

MANDERS.

[*As though petrified.*] Such things in this house! in this house!

MRS. ALVING.

I had borne a great deal in this house. To keep him at home in the evenings, and at night, I had to make

myself his boon companion in his secret orgies up in his room. There I have had to sit alone with him, to clink glasses and drink with him, and to listen to his ribald, silly talk. I have had to fight with him to get him dragged to bed——

MANDERS.

[*Moved.*] And you were able to bear all this!

MRS. ALVING.

I had to bear it for my little boy's sake. But when the last insult was added; when my own servant-maid——; then I swore to myself: This shall come to an end! And so I took the reins into my own hand—the whole control—over him and everything else. For now I had a weapon against him, you see; he dared not oppose me. It was then I sent Oswald away from home. He was nearly seven years old, and was beginning to observe and ask questions, as children do. That I could not bear. It seemed to me the child must be poisoned by merely breathing the air of this polluted home. That was why I sent him away. And now you can see, too, why he was never allowed to set foot inside his home so long as his father lived. No one knows what that cost me.

MANDERS.

You have indeed had a life of trial.

MRS. ALVING.

I could never have borne it if I had not had my work. For I may truly say that I have worked! All the additions to the estate—all the improvements—all the labour-

saving appliances, that Alving was so much praised for having introduced—do you suppose he had energy for anything of the sort?—h e, who lay all day on the sofa, reading an old Court Guide! No; but I may tell you t h i s too: when he had his better intervals, it was I who urged him on; it was I who had to drag the whole load when he relapsed into his evil ways, or sank into querulous wretchedness.

MANDERS.

And it is to this man that you raise a memorial?

MRS. ALVING.

There you see the power of an evil conscience.

MANDERS

Evil——? What do you mean?

MRS. ALVING.

It always seemed to me impossible but that the truth must come out and be believed. So the Orphanage was to deaden all rumours and set every doubt at rest.

MANDERS.

In that you have certainly not missed your aim, Mrs. Alving.

MRS. ALVING.

And besides, I had one other reason. I was determined that Oswald, my own boy, should inherit nothing whatever from his father.

MANDERS.

Then it is Alving's fortune that——?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes. The sums I have spent upon the Orphanage, year by year, make up the amount—I have reckoned it up precisely—the amount which made Lieutenant Alving "a good match" in his day.

MANDERS.

I don't understand——

MRS. ALVING.

It was my purchase-money. I do not choose that that money should pass into Oswald's hands. My son shall have everything from me—everything.

OSWALD ALVING *enters through the second door to the right; he has taken off his hat and overcoat in the hall.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Going towards him.*] Are you back again already? My dear, dear boy!

OSWALD.

Yes. What can a fellow do out of doors in this eternal rain? But I hear dinner is ready. That's capital!

REGINA.

[*With a parcel, from the dining-room.*] A parcel has come for you, Mrs. Alving. [*Hands it to her.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*With a glance at* MR. MANDERS.] No doubt copies of the ode for to-morrow's ceremony.

MANDERS.

H'm——

REGINA.

And dinner is ready.

MRS. ALVING.

Very well. We will come directly. I will just——
[*Begins to open the parcel.*

REGINA.

[*To* OSWALD.] Would Mr. Alving like red or white wine?

OSWALD.

Both, if you please.

REGINA.

Bien. Very well, sir. [*She goes into the dining-room.*

OSWALD.

I may as well help to uncork it.
[*He also goes into the dining-room, the door of which swings half open behind him.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Who has opened the parcel.*] Yes, I thought so. Here is the Ceremonial Ode, Manders.

MANDERS.

[*With folded hands.*] With what countenance I am to deliver my discourse to-morrow——!

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, you will get through it somehow.

MANDERS.

[*Softly, so as not to be heard in the dining-room.*] Yes; it would not do to provoke scandal.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Under her breath, but firmly.*] No. But then this long, hateful comedy will be ended. From the day after to-morrow, I shall act in every way as though he who is dead had never lived in this house. There shall be no one here but my boy and his mother.

[*From the dining-room comes the noise of a chair overturned, and at the same moment is heard:*

REGINA.

[*Sharply, but in a whisper.*] Oswald! take care! are you mad? Let me go!

MRS. ALVING.

[*Starts in terror.*] Ah——!

[*She stares wildly towards the half-open door.* OSWALD *is heard laughing and humming. A bottle is uncorked.*

MANDERS.

[*Agitated.*] What can be the matter? What is it Mrs. Alving?

MRS. ALVING.

[*Hoarsely.*] Ghosts! The couple from the conservatory—risen again!

MANDERS.

Is it possible! Regina——? Is s h e——?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes. Come. Not a word——!

[*She seizes* PASTOR MANDERS *by the arm, and walks unsteadily towards the dining-room.*

ACT SECOND

The same room. The mist still lies heavy over the landscape.

MANDERS *and* MRS. ALVING *enter from the dining-room.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Still in the doorway.*] *Velbekomme*,[1] Mr. Manders. [*Turns back towards the dining-room.*] Aren't you coming too, Oswald?

OSWALD.

[*From within.*] No, thank you. I think I shall go out a little.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, do. The weather seems a little brighter now. [*She shuts the dining-room door, goes to the hall door, and calls:*] Regina!

REGINA.

[*Outside.*] Yes, Mrs. Alving?

MRS. ALVING.

Go down to the laundry, and help with the garlands.

[1] A phrase equivalent to the German *Prosit die Mahlzeit*—"May good digestion wait on appetite."

REGINA.

Yes, Mrs. Alving.

MRS. ALVING *assures herself that* REGINA *goes; then shuts the door:*

MANDERS.

I suppose he cannot overhear us in there?

MRS. ALVING.

Not when the door is shut. Besides, he's just going out.

MANDERS.

I am still quite upset. I don't know how I could swallow a morsel of dinner.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Controlling her nervousness, walks up and down.*] Nor I. But what is to be done now?

MANDERS.

Yes; what is to be done? I am really quite at a loss. I am so utterly without experience in matters of this sort.

MRS. ALVING.

I feel sure that, so far, no mischief has been done.

MANDERS.

No; heaven forbid! But it is an unseemly state of things, nevertheless.

MRS. ALVING.

It is only an idle fancy on Oswald's part; you may be sure of that.

MANDERS.

Well, as I say, I am not accustomed to affairs of the kind. But I should certainly think——

MRS. ALVING.

Out of the house she must go, and that immediately. That is as clear as daylight——

MANDERS.

Yes, of course she must.

MRS. ALVING.

But where to? It would not be right to——

MANDERS.

Where to? Home to her father, of course.

MRS. ALVING.

To whom did you say?

MANDERS.

To her—— But then, Engstrand is not——? Good God, Mrs. Alving, it's impossible! You must be mistaken after all.

MRS. ALVING.

Unfortunately there is no possibility of mistake. Johanna confessed everything to me; and Alving could not

deny it. So there was nothing to be done but to get the matter hushed up.

MANDERS.

No, you could do nothing else.

MRS. ALVING.

The girl left our service at once, and got a good sum of money to hold her tongue for the time. The rest she managed for herself when she got to town. She renewed her old acquaintance with Engstrand, no doubt let him see that she had money in her purse, and told him some tale about a foreigner who put in here with a yacht that summer. So she and Engstrand got married in hot haste. Why, you married them yourself.

MANDERS.

But then how to account for——? I recollect distinctly Engstrand coming to give notice of the marriage. He was quite overwhelmed with contrition, and bitterly reproached himself for the misbehaviour he and his sweetheart had been guilty of.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes; of course he had to take the blame upon himself.

MANDERS.

But such a piece of duplicity on his part! And towards me to! I never could have believed it of Jacob Engstrand. I shall not fail to take him seriously to task; he may be sure of that.—And then the immorality of such a connection! For money——! How much did the girl receive?

MRS. ALVING.

Three hundred dollars.

MANDERS.

Just think of it—for a miserable three hundred dollars, to go and marry a fallen woman!

MRS. ALVING.

Then what have you to say of me? I went and married a fallen man.

MANDERS.

Why—good heavens!—what are you talking about! A fallen man!

MRS. ALVING.

Do you think Alving was any purer when I went with him to the altar than Johanna was when Engstrand married her?

MANDERS.

Well, but there is a world of difference between the two cases——

MRS. ALVING.

Not so much difference after all—except in the price: —a miserable three hundred dollars and a whole fortune.

MANDERS.

How can you compare such absolutely dissimilar cases? You had taken counsel with your own heart and with your natural advisers.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Without looking at him.*] I thought you understood where what you call my heart had strayed to at the time.

MANDERS.

[*Distantly.*] Had I understood anything of the kind, I should not have been a daily guest in your husband's house.

MRS. ALVING.

At any rate, the fact remains that with myself I took no counsel whatever.

MANDERS.

Well then, with your nearest relatives—as your duty bade you—with your mother and your two aunts.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, that is true. Those three cast up the account for me. Oh, it's marvellous how clearly they made out that it would be downright madness to refuse such an offer. If mother could only see me now, and know what all that grandeur has come to!

MANDERS.

Nobody can be held responsible for the result. This, at least, remains clear: your marriage was in full accordance with law and order.

MRS. ALVING.

[*At the window.*] Oh, that perpetual law and order! I often think t h a t is what does all the mischief in this world of ours.

MANDERS.

Mrs. Alving, that is a sinful way of talking.

MRS. ALVING.

Well, I can't help it; I must have done with all this constraint and insincerity. I can endure it no longer. I must work my way out to freedom.

MANDERS.

What do you mean by that?

MRS. ALVING.

[*Drumming on the window-frame.*] I ought never to have concealed the facts of Alving's life. But at that time I dared not do anything else—I was afraid, partly on my own account. I was such a coward.

MANDERS.

A coward?

MRS. ALVING.

If people had come to know anything, they would have said—"Poor man! with a runaway wife, no wonder he kicks over the traces."

MANDERS.

Such remarks might have been made with a certain show of right.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Looking steadily at him.*] If I were what I ought to be, I should go to Oswald and say, "Listen, my boy: your father led a vicious life——"

MANDERS.

Merciful heavens——!

MRS. ALVING.

——and then I should tell him all I have told you—every word of it.

MANDERS.

You shock me unspeakably, Mrs. Alving.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes; I know that. I know that very well. I myself am shocked at the idea. [*Goes away from the window.*] I am such a coward.

MANDERS.

You call it "cowardice" to do your plain duty? Have you forgotten that a son ought to love and honour his father and mother?

MRS. ALVING.

Do not let us talk in such general terms. Let us ask: Ought Oswald to love and honour Chamberlain Alving?

MANDERS.

Is there no voice in your mother's heart that forbids you to destroy your son's ideals?

MRS. ALVING.

But what about the truth?

MANDERS.

But what about the ideals?

MRS. ALVING.

Oh—ideals, ideals! If only I were not such a coward!

MANDERS.

Do not despise ideals, Mrs. Alving; they will avenge themselves cruelly. Take Oswald's case: he, unfortunately, seems to have few enough ideals as it is; but I can see that his father stands before him as an ideal.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, that is true.

MANDERS.

And this habit of mind you have yourself implanted and fostered by your letters.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes; in my superstitious awe for duty and the proprieties, I lied to my boy, year after year. Oh, what a coward—what a coward I have been!

MANDERS.

You have established a happy illusion in your son's heart, Mrs. Alving; and assuredly you ought not to undervalue it.

MRS. ALVING.

H'm; who knows whether it is so happy after all——? But, at any rate, I will not have any tampering with Regina. He shall not go and wreck the poor girl's life.

MANDERS.

No; good God—that would be terrible!

MRS. ALVING.

If I knew he was in earnest, and that it would be for his happiness——

MANDERS.

What? What then?

MRS. ALVING.

But it couldn't be; for unfortunately Regina is not the right sort of woman.

MANDERS.

Well, what then? What do you mean?

MRS. ALVING.

If I weren't such a pitiful coward, I should say to him, "Marry her, or make what arrangement you please, only let us have nothing underhand about it."

MANDERS.

Merciful heavens, would you let them m a r r y! Anything so dreadful——! so unheard of——

MRS. ALVING.

Do you really mean "unheard of"? Frankly, Pastor Manders, do you suppose that throughout the country there are not plenty of married couples as closely akin as they?

MANDERS.

I don't in the least understand you.

MRS. ALVING.

Oh yes, indeed you do.

MANDERS.

Ah, you are thinking of the possibility that—— Alas! yes, family life is certainly not always so pure as it ought to be. But in such a case as you point to, one can never know—at least with any certainty. Here, on the other hand—that you, a mother, can think of letting your son——!

MRS. ALVING.

But I cannot—I wouldn't for anything in the world; that is precisely what I am saying.

MANDERS.

No, because you are a "coward," as you put it. But if you were not a "coward," then——? Good God! a connection so shocking!

MRS. ALVING.

So far as that goes, they say we are all sprung from connections of that sort. And who is it that arranged the world so, Pastor Manders?

MANDERS.

Questions of that kind I must decline to discuss with you, Mrs. Alving; you are far from being in the right frame of mind for them. But that you dare to call your scruples "cowardly"——!

MRS. ALVING.

Let me tell you what I mean. I am timid and faint-hearted because of the ghosts that hang about me, and that I can never quite shake off.

MANDERS.

What do you say hangs about you?

MRS. ALVING.

Ghosts! When I heard Regina and Oswald in there, it was as though ghosts rose up before me. But I almost think we are all of us ghosts, Pastor Manders. It is not only what we have inherited from our father and mother that "walks" in us. It is all sorts of dead ideas, and lifeless old beliefs, and so forth. They have no vitality, but they cling to us all the same, and we cannot shake them off. Whenever I take up a newspaper, I seem to see ghosts gliding between the lines. There must be ghosts all the country over, as thick as the sands of the sea. And then we are, one and all, so pitifully afraid of the light.

MANDERS.

Aha—here we have the fruits of your reading. And pretty fruits they are, upon my word! Oh, those horrible, revolutionary, freethinking books!

MRS. ALVING.

You are mistaken, my dear Pastor. It was you yourself who set me thinking; and I thank you for it with all my heart.

MANDERS.

I!

MRS. ALVING.

Yes—when you forced me under the yoke of what you called duty and obligation; when you lauded as right and proper what my whole soul rebelled against as something loathsome. It was then that I began to look into the seams of your doctrines. I wanted only to pick at a single knot; but when I had got that undone, the whole thing ravelled out. And then I understood that it was all machine-sewn.

MANDERS.

[*Softly, with emotion.*] And was that the upshot of my life's hardest battle?

MRS. ALVING.

Call it rather your most pitiful defeat.

MANDERS.

It was my greatest victory, Helen—the victory over myself.

MRS. ALVING.

It was a crime against us both.

MANDERS.

When you went astray, and came to me crying, "Here I am; take me!" I commanded you, saying, "Woman, go home to your lawful husband." Was t h a t a crime?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, I think so.

MANDERS.

We two do not understand each other.

MRS. ALVING.

Not now, at any rate.

MANDERS.

Never—never in my most secret thoughts have I regarded you otherwise than as another's wife.

MRS. ALVING.

Oh—indeed?

MANDERS.

Helen——!

MRS. ALVING.

People so easily forget their past selves.

MANDERS.

I do not. I am what I always was.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Changing the subject.*] Well, well, well; don't let us talk of old times any longer. You are now over head and ears in Boards and Committees, and I am fighting my battle with ghosts, both within me and without.

MANDERS.

Those without I shall help you to lay. After all the terrible things I have heard from you to-day, I cannot in

conscience permit an unprotected girl to remain in your house.

MRS. ALVING.

Don't you think the best plan would be to get her provided for?—I mean, by a good marriage.

MANDERS.

No doubt. I think it would be desirable for her in every respect. Regina is now at the age when—— Of course I don't know much about these things, but——

MRS. ALVING.

Regina matured very early.

MANDERS.

Yes, I thought so. I have an impression that she was remarkably well developed, physically, when I prepared her for confirmation. But in the meantime, she ought to be at home, under her father's eye—— Ah! but Engstrand is not—— That he—that h e—could so hide the truth from me! [*A knock at the door into the hall.*

MRS. ALVING.

Who can this be? Come in!

ENGSTRAND.

[*In his Sunday clothes, in the doorway.*] I humbly beg your pardon, but——

MANDERS.

Aha! H'm——

MRS. ALVING.

Is that you, Engstrand?

ENGSTRAND.

. . . there was none of the servants about, so I took the great liberty of just knocking.

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, very well. Come in. Do you want to speak to me?

ENGSTRAND.

[*Comes in.*] No, I'm obliged to you, ma'am; it was with his Reverence I wanted to have a word or two.

MANDERS.

[*Walking up and down the room.*] Ah—indeed! You want to speak to me, do you?

ENGSTRAND.

Yes, I'd like so terrible much to——

MANDERS.

[*Stops in front of him.*] Well; may I ask what you want?

ENGSTRAND.

Well, it was just this, your Reverence: we've been paid off down yonder—my grateful thanks to you, ma'am,—and now everything's finished, I've been thinking it would be but right and proper if we, that have been working so

honestly together all this time—well, I was thinking we ought to end up with a little prayer-meeting to-night.

MANDERS.

A prayer-meeting? Down at the Orphanage?

ENGSTRAND.

Oh, if your Reverence doesn't think it proper——

MANDERS.

Oh yes, I do; but—h'm——

ENGSTRAND.

I've been in the habit of offering up a little prayer in the evenings, myself——

MRS. ALVING.

Have you?

ENGSTRAND.

Yes, every now and then—just a little edification, in a manner of speaking. But I'm a poor, common man, and have little enough gift, God help me!—and so I thought, as the Reverend Mr. Manders happened to be here, I'd——

MANDERS.

Well, you see, Engstrand, I have a question to put to you first. Are you in the right frame of mind for such a meeting! Do you feel your conscience clear and at ease?

ENGSTRAND.

Oh, God help us, your Reverence! we'd better not talk about conscience.

MANDERS.

Yes, that is just what we must talk about. What have you to answer?

ENGSTRAND.

Why—a man's conscience—it can be bad enough now and then.

MANDERS.

Ah, you admit that. Then perhaps you will make a clean breast of it, and tell me—the real truth about Regina?

MRS. ALVING.

[*Quickly.*] Mr. Manders!

MANDERS.

[*Reassuringly.*] Please allow me——

ENGSTRAND.

About Regina! Lord, what a turn you gave me! [*Looks at* MRS. ALVING.] There's nothing wrong about Regina, is there?

MANDERS.

We will hope not. But I mean, what is the truth about you and Regina? You pass for her father, eh!

ENGSTRAND.

[*Uncertain.*] Well—h'm—your Reverence knows all about me and poor Johanna.

MANDERS.

Come now, no more prevarication! Your wife told Mrs. Alving the whole story before quitting her service.

ENGSTRAND.

Well, then, may——! Now, did she really?

MANDERS.

You see we know you now, Engstrand.

ENGSTRAND.

And she swore and took her Bible oath——

MANDERS.

Did she take her Bible oath?

ENGSTRAND.

No; she only swore; but she did it that solemn-like.

MANDERS.

And you have hidden the truth from me all these years? Hidden it from me, who have trusted you without reserve, in everything.

ENGSTRAND.

Well, I can't deny it.

MANDERS.

Have I deserved this of you, Engstrand? Have I not always been ready to help you in word and deed, so far as it lay in my power? Answer me. Have I not?

ENGSTRAND.

It would have been a poor look-out for me many a time but for the Reverend Mr. Manders.

MANDERS.

And this is how you reward me! You cause me to enter falsehoods in the Church Register, and you withhold from me, year after year, the explanations you owed alike to me and to the truth. Your conduct has been wholly inexcusable, Engstrand; and from this time forward I have done with you!

ENGSTRAND.

[*With a sigh.*] Yes! I suppose there's no help for it.

MANDERS.

How can you possibly justify yourself?

ENGSTRAND.

Who could ever have thought she'd have gone and made bad worse by talking about it? Will your Reverence just fancy yourself in the same trouble as poor Johanna——

MANDERS.

I!

ENGSTRAND.

Lord bless you, I don't mean just exactly the same. But I mean, if your Reverence had anything to be ashamed of in the eyes of the world, as the saying goes. We menfolk oughtn't to judge a poor woman too hardly, your Reverence.

MANDERS.

I am not doing so. It is you I am reproaching.

ENGSTRAND.

Might I make so bold as to ask your Reverence a bit of a question?

MANDERS.

Yes, if you want to.

ENGSTRAND.

Isn't it right and proper for a man to raise up the fallen?

MANDERS.

Most certainly it is.

ENGSTRAND.

And isn't a man bound to keep his sacred word?

MANDERS.

Why, of course he is; but——

ENGSTRAND.

When Johanna had got into trouble through that Englishman—or it might have been an American or a Russian, as they call them—well, you see, she came down into the town. Poor thing, she'd sent me about my business once or twice before: for she couldn't bear the sight of anything as wasn't handsome; and I'd got this damaged leg of mine. Your Reverence recollects how I ventured up into a dancing saloon, where seafaring men was carrying on with drink and devilry, as the

saying goes. And then, when I was for giving them a bit of an admonition to lead a new life——

MRS. ALVING.

[*At the window.*] H'm——

MANDERS.

I know all about that, Engstrand; the ruffians threw you downstairs. You have told me of the affair already. Your infirmity is an honour to you.

ENGSTRAND.

I'm not puffed up about it, your Reverence. But what I wanted to say was, that when she came and confessed all to me, with weeping and gnashing of teeth, I can tell your Reverence I was sore at heart to hear it.

MANDERS.

Were you indeed, Engstrand? Well, go on.

ENGSTRAND.

So I says to her, "The American, he's sailing about on the boundless sea. And as for you, Johanna," says I, "you've committed a grievous sin, and you're a fallen creature. But Jacob Engstrand," says I, "he's got two good legs to stand upon, h e has——" You see, your Reverence, I was speaking figurative-like.

MANDERS.

I understand quite well. Go on.

ENGSTRAND.

Well, that was how I raised her up and made an honest woman of her, so as folks shouldn't get to know how as she'd gone astray with foreigners.

MANDERS.

In all that you acted very well. Only I cannot approve of your stooping to take money——

ENGSTRAND.

Money? I? Not a farthing!

MANDERS.

[*Inquiringly to* MRS. ALVING.] But——

ENGSTRAND.

Oh, wait a minute!—now I recollect. Johanna d i d have a trifle of money. But I would have nothing to do with t h a t. "No," says I, "that's mammon; that's the wages of sin. This dirty gold—or notes, or whatever it was—we'll just fling that back in the American's face," says I. But he was off and away, over the stormy sea, your Reverence.

MANDERS.

Was he really, my good fellow?

ENGSTRAND.

He was indeed, sir. So Johanna and I, we agreed that the money should go to the child's education; and so it did, and I can account for every blessed farthing of it.

MANDERS.

Why, this alters the case considerably.

ENGSTRAND.

That's just how it stands, your Reverence. And I make so bold as to say as I've been an honest father to Regina, so far as my poor strength went; for I'm but a weak vessel, worse luck!

MANDERS.

Well, well, my good fellow——

ENGSTRAND.

All the same, I bear myself witness as I've brought up the child, and lived kindly with poor Johanna, and ruled over my own house, as the Scripture has it. But it couldn't never enter my head to go to your Reverence and puff myself up and boast because even the likes of me had done some good in the world. No, sir; when anything of that sort happens to Jacob Engstrand, he holds his tongue about it. It don't happen so terrible often, I daresay. And when I do come to see your Reverence, I find a mortal deal that's wicked and weak to talk about. For I said it before, and I says it again—a man's conscience isn't always as clean as it might be.

MANDERS.

Give me your hand, Jacob Engstrand.

ENGSTRAND.

Oh, Lord! your Reverence——

MANDERS.

Come, no nonsense [*wrings his hand*]. There we are!

ENGSTRAND.

And if I might humbly beg your Reverence's pardon——

MANDERS.

You? On the contrary, it is I who ought to beg your pardon——

ENGSTRAND.

Lord, no, sir!

MANDERS.

Yes, assuredly. And I do it with all my heart. Forgive me for misunderstanding you. I only wish I could give you some proof of my hearty regret, and of my goodwill towards you——

ENGSTRAND.

Would your Reverence do it?

MANDERS.

With the greatest pleasure.

ENGSTRAND.

Well then, here's the very chance. With the bit of money I've saved here, I was thinking I might set up a Sailors' Home down in the town.

MRS. ALVING.

You?

ENGSTRAND.

Yes; it might be a sort of Orphanage, too, in a manner of speaking. There's such a many temptations for seafaring folk ashore. But in this Home of mine, a man might feel like as he was under a father's eye, I was thinking.

MANDERS.

What do you say to this, Mrs. Alving?

ENGSTRAND.

It isn't much as I've got to start with, Lord help me! But if I could only find a helping hand, why——

MANDERS.

Yes, yes; we will look into the matter more closely. I entirely approve of your plan. But now, go before me and make everything ready, and get the candles lighted, so as to give the place an air of festivity. And then we will pass an edifying hour together, my good fellow; for now I quite believe you are in the right frame of mind.

ENGSTRAND.

Yes, I trust I am. And so I'll say good-bye, ma'am, and thank you kindly; and take good care of Regina for me—[*Wipes a tear from his eye*]—poor Johanna's child. Well, it's a queer thing, now; but it's just like as if she'd growd into the very apple of my eye. It is, indeed.

[*He bows and goes out through the hall.*

MANDERS.

Well, what do you say of that man now, Mrs. Alving? T h a t was a very different account of matters, was it not?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, it certainly was.

MANDERS.

It only shows how excessively careful one ought to be in judging one's fellow creatures. But what a heartfelt joy it is to ascertain that one has been mistaken! Don't you think so?

MRS. ALVING.

I think you are, and will always be, a great baby, Manders.

MANDERS.

I?

MRS. ALVING.

[*Laying her two hands upon his shoulders.*] And I say that I have half a mind to put my arms round your neck, and kiss you.

MANDERS.

[*Stepping hastily back.*] No, no! God bless me! What an idea!

MRS. ALVING.

[*With a smile.*] Oh, you needn't be afraid of me.

MANDERS.

[*By the table.*] You have sometimes such an exaggerated way of expressing yourself. Now, let me just collect all the documents, and put them in my bag. [*He does so.*] There, that's all right. And now, good-bye for the present. Keep your eyes open when Oswald comes back. I shall look in again later.

[*He takes his hat and goes out through the hall door.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Sighs, looks for a moment out of the window, sets the room in order a little, and is about to go into the dining-room, but stops at the door with a half-suppressed cry.* Oswald, are you still at table?

OSWALD.

[*In the dining room.*] I'm only finishing my cigar.

MRS. ALVING.

I thought you had gone for a little walk.

OSWALD.

In such weather as this?

[*A glass clinks.* MRS. ALVING *leaves the door open, and sits down with her knitting on the sofa by the window.*

OSWALD.

Wasn't that Pastor Manders that went out just now?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes; he went down to the Orphanage.

OSWALD.

H'm. [*The glass and decanter clink again.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*With a troubled glance.*] Dear Oswald, you should take care of that liqueur. It is strong.

OSWALD.

It keeps out the damp.

MRS. ALVING.

Wouldn't you rather come in here, to me?

OSWALD.

I mayn't smoke in there.

MRS. ALVING.

You know quite well you may smoke cigars.

OSWALD.

Oh, all right then; I'll come in. Just a tiny drop more first.—There! [*He comes into the room with his cigar, and shuts the door after him. A short silence.*] Where has the pastor gone to?

MRS. ALVING.

I have just told you; he went down to the Orphanage.

OSWALD.

Oh, yes; so you did.

MRS. ALVING.

You shouldn't sit so long at table, Oswald.

OSWALD.

[*Holding his cigar behind him.*] But I find it so pleasant, mother. [*Strokes and caresses her.*] Just think what

it is for me to come home and sit at mother's own table, in mother's room, and eat mother's delicious dishes.

MRS. ALVING.

My dear, dear boy!

OSWALD.

[*Somewhat impatiently, walks about and smokes.*] And what else can I do with myself here? I can't set to work at anything.

MRS. ALVING.

Why can't you?

OSWALD.

In such weather as this? Without a single ray of sunshine the whole day? [*Walks up the room.*] Oh, not to be able to work——!

MRS. ALVING.

Perhaps it was not quite wise of you to come home?

OSWALD.

Oh, yes, mother; I had to.

MRS. ALVING.

You know I would ten times rather forgo the joy of having you here, than let you——

OSWALD.

[*Stops beside the table.*] Now just tell me, mother: does it really make you so very happy to have me home again?

MRS. ALVING.

D o e s it make me happy!

OSWALD.

[*Crumpling up a newspaper.*] I should have thought it must be pretty much the same to you whether I was in existence or not.

MRS. ALVING.

Have you the heart to say that to your mother, Oswald?

OSWALD.

But you've got on very well without me all this time.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes; I have got on without you. That is true.

[*A silence. Twilight slowly begins to fall.* OSWALD *paces to and fro across the room. He has laid his cigar down.*

OSWALD.

[*Stops beside* MRS. ALVING.] Mother, may I sit on the sofa beside you?

MRS. ALVING.

[*Makes room for him.*] Yes, do, my dear boy.

OSWALD.

[*Sits down.*] There is something I must tell you, mother.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Anxiously.*] Well?

OSWALD.

[*Looks fixedly before him.*] For I can't go on hiding it any longer.

MRS. ALVING.

Hiding what? What is it?

OSWALD.

[*As before.*] I could never bring myself to write to you about it; and since I've come home——

MRS. ALVING.

[*Seizes him by the arm.*] Oswald, what is the matter?

OSWALD.

Both yesterday and to-day I have tried to put the thoughts away from me—to cast them off; but it's no use.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Rising.*] Now you must tell me everything, Oswald!

OSWALD.

[*Draws her down to the sofa again.*] Sit still; and then I will try to tell you.—I complained of fatigue after my journey——

MRS. ALVING.

Well? What then?

OSWALD.

But it isn't that that is the matter with me; not any ordinary fatigue——

MRS. ALVING.

[*Tries to jump up.*] You are not ill, Oswald?

OSWALD.

[*Draws her down again.*] Sit still, mother. Do take it quietly. I'm not downright ill, either; not what is commonly called "ill." [*Clasps his hands above his head.*] Mother, my mind is broken down—ruined—I shall never be able to work again!

[*With his hands before his face, he buries his head in her lap, and breaks into bitter sobbing.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*White and trembling.*] Oswald! Look at me! No, no; it's not true.

OSWALD.

[*Looks up with despair in his eyes.*] Never to be able to work again! Never!—never! A living death! Mother, can you imagine anything so horrible?

MRS. ALVING.

My poor boy! How has this horrible thing come upon you?

OSWALD.

[*Sitting upright again.*] That's just what I cannot possibly grasp or understand. I have never led a dissipated life—never, in any respect. You mustn't believe that of me, mother! I've never done that.

MRS. ALVING.

I am sure you haven't, Oswald.

OSWALD.

And yet this has come upon me just the same—this awful misfortune!

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, but it will pass over, my dear, blessëd boy. It's nothing but over-work. Trust me, I am right.

OSWALD.

[*Sadly.*] I thought so too, at first; but it isn't so.

MRS. ALVING.

Tell me everything, from beginning to end.

OSWALD.

Yes, I will.

MRS. ALVING.

When did you first notice it?

OSWALD.

It was directly after I had been home last time, and had got back to Paris again. I began to feel the most violent pains in my head—chiefly in the back of my head, they seemed to come. It was as though a tight iron ring was being screwed round my neck and upwards.

MRS. ALVING.

Well, and then?

OSWALD.

At first I thought it was nothing but the ordinary headache I had been so plagued with while I was growing up——

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, yes——

OSWALD.

But it wasn't that. I soon found that out. I couldn't work any more. I wanted to begin upon a big new picture, but my powers seemed to fail me; all my strength was crippled; I could form no definite images; everything swam before me—whirling round and round. Oh, it was an awful state! At last I sent for a doctor—and from him I learned the truth.

MRS. ALVING.

How do you mean?

OSWALD.

He was one of the first doctors in Paris. I told him my symptoms; and then he set to work asking me a string of questions which I thought had nothing to do with the matter. I couldn't imagine what the man was after——

MRS. ALVING.

Well?

OSWALD.

At last he said: "There has been something worm-eaten in you from your birth." He used that very word—*vermoulu.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Breathlessly.*] What did he mean by that?

OSWALD.

I didn't understand either, and begged him to explain himself more clearly. And then the old cynic said—[*Clenching his fist*] Oh——!

MRS. ALVING.

What did he say?

OSWALD.

He said, "The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children."

MRS. ALVING.

[*Rising slowly.*] The sins of the fathers——!

OSWALD.

I very nearly struck him in the face——

MRS. ALVING.

[*Walks away across the room.*] The sins of the fathers——

OSWALD.

[*Smiles sadly.*] Yes; what do you think of that? Of course I assured him that such a thing was out of the question. But do you think he gave in? No, he stuck to it; and it was only when I produced your letters and translated the passages relating to father——

MRS. ALVING.

But t h e n——?

OSWALD.

Then of course he had to admit that he was on the wrong track; and so I learned the truth—the incomprehensible truth! I ought not to have taken part with my comrades in that light-hearted, glorious life of theirs. It had been too much for my strength. So I had brought it upon myself!

MRS. ALVING.

Oswald! No, no; do not believe it!

OSWALD.

No other explanation was possible, he said. T h a t ' s the awful part of it. Incurably ruined for life—by my own heedlessness! All that I meant to have done in the world—I never dare think of it again—I'm not a b l e to think of it. Oh! if I could only live over again, and undo all I have done! [*He buries his face in the sofa.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Wrings her hands and walks, in silent struggle, backwards and forwards.*]

OSWALD.

[*After a while, looks up and remains resting upon his elbow.*] If it had only been something inherited—something one wasn't responsible for! But this! To have thrown away so shamefully, thoughtlessly, recklessly, one's own happiness, one's own health, everything in the world —one's future, one's very life——!

MRS. ALVING.

No, no, my dear, darling boy; this is impossible! [*Bends over him.*] Things are not so desperate as you think.

OSWALD.

Oh, you don't know—— [*Springs up.*] And then, mother, to cause you all this sorrow! Many a time I have almost wished and hoped that at bottom you didn't care so very much about me.

MRS. ALVING.

I, Oswald? My only boy! You are all I have in the world! The only thing I care about!

OSWALD.

[*Seizes both her hands and kisses them.*] Yes, yes, I see it. When I'm at home, I see it, of course; and that's almost the hardest part for me.—But now you know the whole story; and now we won't talk any more about it to-day. I daren't think of it for long together. [*Goes up the room.*] Get me something to drink, mother.

MRS. ALVING.

To drink? What do you want to drink now?

OSWALD.

Oh, anything you like. You have some cold punch in the house.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, but my dear Oswald——

OSWALD.

Don't refuse me, mother. Do be kind, now! I m u s t have something to wash down all these gnawing thoughts. [*Goes into the conservatory.*] And then ——it's so dark here! [MRS. ALVING *pulls a bell-rope on the right.*] And this ceaseless rain! It may go on week after week, for months together. Never to get a glimpse of the sun! I can't recollect ever having seen the sun shine all the times I've been at home.

MRS. ALVING.

Oswald—you are thinking of going away from me.

OSWALD.

H'm—[*Drawing a heavy breath.*]—I'm not thinking of anything. I c a n n o t think of anything! [*In a low voice.*] I let thinking alone.

REGINA.

[*From the dining-room.*] Did you ring, ma'am?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes; let us have the lamp in.

REGINA.

Yes, ma'am. It's ready lighted. [*Goes out.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Goes across to* OSWALD.] Oswald, be frank with me.

OSWALD.

Well, so I am, mother. [*Goes to the table.*] I think I have told you enough.

[REGINA *brings the lamp and sets it upon the table.*

MRS. ALVING.

Regina, you may bring us a small bottle of champagne.

REGINA.

Very well, ma'am. [*Goes out.*

OSWALD.

[*Puts his arm round* MRS. ALVING'S *neck.*] That's just what I wanted. I knew mother wouldn't let her boy go thirsty.

MRS. ALVING.

My own, poor, darling Oswald; how could I deny you anything now?

OSWALD.

[*Eagerly.*] Is that true, mother? Do you mean it?

MRS. ALVING.

How? What?

OSWALD.

That you couldn't deny me anything.

MRS. ALVING.

My dear Oswald——

OSWALD.

Hush!

REGINA.

[*Brings a tray with a half-bottle of champagne and two glasses, which she sets on the table.*] Shall I open it?

OSWALD.

No, thanks. I will do it myself.

[REGINA *goes out again.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Sits down by the table.*] What was it you meant—that I mustn't deny you?

OSWALD.

[*Busy opening the bottle.*] First let us have a glass—or two.

[*The cork pops; he pours wine into one glass, and is about to pour it into the other.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Holding her hand over it.*] Thanks; not for me.

OSWALD.

Oh! won't you? Then I will!

[*He empties the glass, fills, and empties it again; then he sits down by the table.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*In expectancy.*] Well?

OSWALD.

[*Without looking at her.*] Tell me—I thought you and Pastor Manders seemed so odd—so quiet—at dinner today.

MRS. ALVING.

Did you notice it?

OSWALD.

Yes. H'm—— [*After a short silence.*] Tell me: what do you think of Regina?

MRS. ALVING.

What do I think?

OSWALD.

Yes; isn't she splendid?

MRS. ALVING.

My dear Oswald, you don't know her as I do——

OSWALD.

Well?

MRS. ALVING.

Regina, unfortunately, was allowed to stay at home too long. I ought to have taken her earlier into my house.

OSWALD.

Yes, but isn't she splendid to look at, mother?

[*He fills his glass.*

MRS. ALVING.

Regina has many serious faults——

OSWALD.

Oh, what does that matter? [*He drinks again.*

MRS. ALVING.

But I am fond of her, nevertheless, and I am responsible for her. I wouldn't for all the world have any harm happen to her.

OSWALD.

[*Springs up.*] Mother, Regina is my only salvation!

MRS. ALVING.

[*Rising.*] What do you mean by that?

OSWALD.

I cannot go on bearing all this anguish of soul alone.

MRS. ALVING.

Have you not your mother to share it with you?

OSWALD.

Yes; that's what I thought; and so I came home to you. But that will not do. I see it won't do. I cannot endure my life here.

MRS. ALVING.

Oswald!

OSWALD.

I must live differently, mother. That is why I must leave you. I will not have you looking on at it.

MRS. ALVING.

My unhappy boy! But, Oswald, while you are so ill as this——

OSWALD.

If it were only the illness, I should stay with you, mother, you may be sure; for you are the best friend I have in the world.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, indeed I am, Oswald; am I not?

OSWALD.

[*Wanders restlessly about.*] But it's all the torment, the gnawing remorse—and then, the great, killing dread. Oh—that awful dread!

MRS. ALVING.

[*Walking after him.*] Dread? What dread? What do you mean?

OSWALD.

Oh, you mustn't ask me any more. I don't know. I can't describe it.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Goes over to the right and pulls the bell.*]

OSWALD.

What is it you want?

MRS. ALVING.

I want my boy to be happy—that is what I want. He sha'n't go on brooding over things. [*To* REGINA, *who appears at the door.*] More champagne—a large bottle. [REGINA *goes.*

OSWALD.

Mother!

MRS. ALVING.

Do you think we don't know how to live here at home?

OSWALD.

Isn't she splendid to look at? How beautifully she's built! And so thoroughly healthy!

MRS. ALVING.

[*Sits by the table.*] Sit down, Oswald; let us talk quietly together.

OSWALD.

[*Sits.*] I daresay you don't know, mother, that I owe Regina some reparation.

MRS. ALVING.

You!

OSWALD.

For a bit of thoughtlessness, or whatever you like to call it—very innocent, at any rate. When I was home last time——

MRS. ALVING.

Well?

OSWALD.

She used often to ask me about Paris, and I used to tell her one thing and another. Then I recollect I happened to say to her one day, "Shouldn't you like to go there yourself?"

MRS. ALVING.

Well?

OSWALD.

I saw her face flush, and then she said, "Yes, I should like it of all things." "Ah, well," I replied, "it might perhaps be managed"—or something like that.

MRS. ALVING.

And then?

OSWALD.

Of course I had forgotten all about it; but the day before yesterday I happened to ask her whether she was glad I was to stay at home so long——

MRS. ALVING.

Yes?

OSWALD.

And then she gave me such a strange look, and asked, "But what's to become of my trip to Paris?"

MRS. ALVING.

Her trip!

OSWALD.

And so it came out that she had taken the thing seriously; that she had been thinking of me the whole time, and had set to work to learn French——

MRS. ALVING.

So t h a t was why——!

OSWALD.

Mother—when I saw that fresh, lovely, splendid girl standing there before me—till then I had hardly noticed her—but when she stood there as though with open arms ready to receive me——

MRS. ALVING.

Oswald!

OSWALD.

——then it flashed upon me that in her lay my salvation; for I saw that she was full of the joy of life.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Starts.*] The joy of life——? Can there be salvation in t h a t?

REGINA.

[*From the dining-room, with a bottle of champagne.*] I'm sorry to have been so long, but I had to go to the cellar. [*Places the bottle on the table.*

OSWALD.

And now bring another glass.

REGINA.

[*Looks at him in surprise.*] There is Mrs. Alving's glass, Mr. Alving.

OSWALD.

Yes, but bring one for yourself, Regina. [REGINA *starts and gives a lightning-like side glance at* MRS. ALVING.] Why do you wait?

REGINA.

[*Softly and hesitatingly.*] Is it Mrs. Alving's wish?

MRS. ALVING.

Bring the glass, Regina.

[REGINA *goes out into the dining-room.*

OSWALD.

[*Follows her with his eyes.*] Have you noticed how she walks?—so firmly and lightly!

MRS. ALVING.

This can never be, Oswald!

OSWALD.

It's a settled thing. Can't you see that? It's no use saying anything against it.

[REGINA *enters with an empty glass, which she keeps in her hand.*

OSWALD.

Sit down, Regina.

[REGINA *looks inquiringly at* MRS. ALVING.

MRS. ALVING.

Sit down. [REGINA *sits on a chair by the dining-room door, still holding the empty glass in her hand.*] Oswald —what were you saying about the joy of life?

OSWALD.

Ah, the joy of life, mother—that's a thing you don't know much about in these parts. I have never felt it here.

MRS. ALVING.

Not when you are with me?

OSWALD.

Not when I'm at home. But you don't understand that.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, yes; I think I almost understand it—now.

OSWALD.

And then, too, the joy of work! At bottom, it's the same thing. But that, too, you know nothing about.

MRS. ALVING.

Perhaps you are right. Tell me more about it, Oswald.

OSWALD.

I only mean that here people are brought up to believe that work is a curse and a punishment for sin, and that life is something miserable, something it would be best to have done with, the sooner the better.

MRS. ALVING.

"A vale of tears," yes; and we certainly do our best to make it one.

OSWALD.

But in the great world people won't hear of such things. There, nobody really believes such doctrines any longer. There, you feel it a positive bliss and ecstasy merely to draw the breath of life. Mother, have you noticed that everything I have painted has turned upon the joy of life?—always, always upon the joy of life?—light and sunshine and glorious air—and faces radiant with happiness. That is why I'm afraid of remaining at home with you.

MRS. ALVING.

Afraid? What are you afraid of here, with me?

OSWALD.

I'm afraid lest all my instincts should be warped into ugliness.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Looks steadily at him.*] Do you think that is what would happen?

OSWALD.

I know it. You may live the same life here as there, and yet it won't be the same life.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Who has been listening eagerly, rises, her eyes big with thought, and says:*] Now I see the sequence of things.

OSWALD.

What is it you see?

MRS. ALVING.

I see it now for the first time. And now I can speak.

OSWALD.

[*Rising.*] Mother, I don't understand you.

REGINA.

[*Who has also risen.*] Perhaps I ought to go?

MRS. ALVING.

No. Stay here. Now I can speak. Now, my boy, you shall know the whole truth. And then you can choose. Oswald! Regina!

OSWALD.

Hush! The Pastor——

MANDERS.

[*Enters by the hall door.*] There! We have had a most edifying time down there.

OSWALD.

So have we.

MANDERS.

We must stand by Engstrand and his Sailors' Home. Regina must go to him and help him——

REGINA.

No thank you, sir.

MANDERS.

[*Noticing her for the first time.*] What——? You here? And with a glass in your hand!

REGINA.

[*Hastily putting the glass down.*] *Pardon!*

OSWALD.

Regina is going with me, Mr. Manders.

MANDERS.

Going! With you!

OSWALD.

Yes; as my wife—if she wishes it.

MANDERS.

But, merciful God——!

REGINA.

I can't help it, sir.

OSWALD.

Or she'll stay here, if I stay.

REGINA.

[*Involuntarily.*] Here!

MANDERS.

I am thunderstruck at your conduct, Mrs. Alving.

MRS. ALVING.

They will do neither one thing nor the other; for now I can speak out plainly.

MANDERS.

You surely will not do that! No, no, no!

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, I can speak and I will. And no ideals shall suffer after all.

OSWALD.

Mother—what is it you are hiding from me?

REGINA.

[*Listening.*] Oh, ma'am, listen! Don't you hear shouts outside.

[*She goes into the conservatory and looks out.*

OSWALD.

[*At the window on the left.*] What's going on? Where does that light come from?

REGINA.

[*Cries out.*] The Orphanage is on fire!

MRS. ALVING.

[*Rushing to the window.*] On fire!

MANDERS.

On fire! Impossible! I've just come from there.

OSWALD.

Where's my hat? Oh, never mind it—Father's Orphanage——! [*He rushes out through the garden door.*

MRS. ALVING.

My shawl, Regina! The whole place is in a blaze!

MANDERS.

Terrible! Mrs. Alving, it is a judgment upon this abode of lawlessness.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, of course. Come, Regina.

[*She and* REGINA *hasten out through the hall.*

MANDERS.

[*Clasps his hands together.*] And we left it uninsured!

[*He goes out the same way.*

ACT THIRD

The room as before. All the doors stand open. The lamp is still burning on the table. It is dark out of doors; there is only a faint glow from the conflagration in the background to the left.

MRS. ALVING, *with a shawl over her head, stands in the conservatory, looking out.* REGINA, *also with a shawl on, stands a little behind her.*

MRS. ALVING.

The whole thing burnt!—burnt to the ground!

REGINA.

The basement is still burning.

MRS. ALVING.

How is it Oswald doesn't come home? There's nothing to be saved.

REGINA.

Should you like me to take down his hat to him?

MRS. ALVING.

Has he not even got his hat on?

REGINA.

[*Pointing to the hall.*] No; there it hangs.

MRS. ALVING.

Let it be. He must come up now. I shall go and look for him myself.

[*She goes out through the garden door.*

MANDERS.

[*Comes in from the hall.*] Is not Mrs. Alving here?

REGINA.

She has just gone down the garden.

MANDERS.

This is the most terrible night I ever went through.

REGINA.

Yes; isn't it a dreadful misfortune, sir?

MANDERS.

Oh, don't talk about it! I can hardly bear to think of it.

REGINA.

How c a n it have happened——?

MANDERS.

Don't ask me, Miss Engstrand! How should *I* know? Do y o u, too——? Is it not enough that your father——?

REGINA.

What about him?

MANDERS.

Oh, he has driven me distracted——

ENGSTRAND.

[*Enters through the hall.*] Your Reverence——

MANDERS.

[*Turns round in terror.*] Are you after me here, too?

ENGSTRAND.

Yes, strike me dead, but I must——! Oh, Lord! what am I saying? But this is a terrible ugly business, your Reverence.

MANDERS.

[*Walks to and fro.*] Alas! alas!

REGINA.

What's the matter?

ENGSTRAND.

Why, it all came of this here prayer-meeting, you see. [*Softly.*] The bird's limed, my girl. [*Aloud.*] And to think it should be my doing that such a thing should be his Reverence's doing!

MANDERS.

But I assure you, Engstrand——

ENGSTRAND.

There wasn't another soul except your Reverence as ever laid a finger on the candles down there.

MANDERS.

[*Stops.*] So you declare. But I certainly cannot recollect that I ever had a candle in my hand.

ENGSTRAND.

And I s a w as clear as daylight how your Reverence took the candle and snuffed it with your fingers, and threw away the snuff among the shavings.

MANDERS.

And you stood and looked on?

ENGSTRAND.

Yes; I saw it as plain as a pike-staff, I did.

MANDERS.

It's quite beyond my comprehension. Besides, it has never been my habit to snuff candles with my fingers.

ENGSTRAND.

And terrible risky it looked, too, that it did! But is there such a deal of harm done after all, your Reverence?

MANDERS.

[*Walks restlessly to and fro.*] Oh, don't ask me!

ENGSTRAND.

[*Walks with him.*] And your Reverence hadn't insured it, neither?

MANDERS.

[*Continuing to walk up and down.*] No, no, no; I have told you so.

ENGSTRAND.

[*Following him.*] Not insured! And then to go straight away down and set light to the whole thing! Lord, Lord, what a misfortune!

MANDERS.

[*Wipes the sweat from his forehead.*] Ay, you may well say that, Engstrand.

ENGSTRAND.

And to think that such a thing should happen to a benevolent Institution, that was to have been a blessing both to town and country, as the saying goes! The newspapers won't be for handling your Reverence very gently, I expect.

MANDERS.

No; that is just what I am thinking of. That is almost the worst of the whole matter. All the malignant attacks and imputations——! Oh, it makes me shudder to think of it!

MRS. ALVING.

[*Comes in from the garden.*] He is not to be persuaded to leave the fire.

MANDERS.

Ah, there you are, Mrs. Alving.

MRS. ALVING.

So you have escaped your Inaugural Address, Pastor Manders.

MANDERS.

Oh, I should so gladly——

MRS. ALVING.

[*In an undertone.*] It is all for the best. That Orphanage would have done no one any good.

MANDERS.

Do you think not?

MRS. ALVING.

Do you think it would?

MANDERS.

It is a terrible misfortune, all the same.

MRS. ALVING.

Let us speak of it plainly, as a matter of business.—Are you waiting for Mr. Manders, Engstrand?

ENGSTRAND.

[*At the hall door.*] That's just what I'm a-doing of, ma'am.

MRS. ALVING.

Then sit down meanwhile.

ENGSTRAND.

Thank you, ma'am; I'd as soon stand.

MRS. ALVING.

[*To* MANDERS.] I suppose you are going by the steamer?

MANDERS.

Yes; it starts in an hour.

MRS. ALVING.

Then be so good as to take all the papers with you. I won't hear another word about this affair. I have other things to think of——

MANDERS.

Mrs. Alving——

MRS. ALVING.

Later on I shall send you a Power of Attorney to settle everything as you please.

MANDERS.

That I will very readily undertake. The original destination of the endowment must now be completely changed, alas!

MRS. ALVING.

Of course it must.

MANDERS.

I think, first of all, I shall arrange that the Solvik property shall pass to the parish. The land is by no

means without value. It can always be turned to account for some purpose or other. And the interest of the money in the Bank I could, perhaps, best apply for the benefit of some undertaking of acknowledged value to the town.

MRS. ALVING.

Do just as you please. The whole matter is now completely indifferent to me.

ENGSTRAND.

Give a thought to my Sailors' Home, your Reverence.

MANDERS.

Upon my word, that is not a bad suggestion. That must be considered.

ENGSTRAND.

Oh, devil take considering—Lord forgive me!

MANDERS.

[*With a sigh.*] And unfortunately I cannot tell how long I shall be able to retain control of these things—whether public opinion may not compel me to retire. It entirely depends upon the result of the official inquiry into the fire——

MRS. ALVING.

What are you talking about?

MANDERS.

And the result can by no means be foretold.

ENGSTRAND.

[*Comes close to him.*] Ay, but it can though. For here stands old Jacob Engstrand.

MANDERS.

Well well, but——?

ENGSTRAND.

[*More softly.*] And Jacob Engstrand isn't the man to desert a noble benefactor in the hour of need, as the saying goes.

MANDERS.

Yes, but my good fellow—how——?

ENGSTRAND.

Jacob Engstrand may be likened to a sort of a guardian angel, he may, your Reverence.

MANDERS.

No, no; I really cannot accept that.

ENGSTRAND.

Oh, that'll be the way of it, all the same. I know a man as has taken others' sins upon himself before now, I do.

MANDERS.

Jacob! [*Wrings his hand.*] Yours is a rare nature. Well, you shall be helped with your Sailors' Home. That you may rely upon.

[ENGSTRAND *tries to thank him, but cannot for emotion.*

MANDERS.

[*Hangs his travelling-bag over his shoulder.*] And now let us set out. We two will go together.

ENGSTRAND.

[*At the dining-room door, softly to* REGINA.] You come along too, my lass. You shall live as snug as the yolk in an egg.

REGINA.

[*Tosses her head.*] *Merci!*

[*She goes out into the hall and fetches* MANDERS'S *overcoat.*

MANDERS.

Good-bye, Mrs. Alving! and may the spirit of Law and Order descend upon this house, and that quickly.

MRS. ALVING.

Good-bye, Pastor Manders.

[*She goes up towards the conservatory, as she sees* OSWALD *coming in through the garden door.*

ENGSTRAND.

[*While he and* REGINA *help* MANDERS *to get his coat on.*] Good-bye, my child. And if any trouble should come to you, you know where Jacob Engstrand is to be found. [*Softly.*] Little Harbour Street, h'm——! [*To* MRS. ALVING *and* OSWALD.] And the refuge for wandering mariners shall be called "Chamberlain Alving's Home," that it shall! And if so be as I'm spared to carry on that house in my own way, I make so bold as to promise that it shall be worthy of the Chamberlain's memory.

MANDERS.

[*In the doorway.*] H'm—h'm!—Come along, my dear Engstrand. Good-bye! Good-bye!

[*He and* ENGSTRAND *go out through the hall.*

OSWALD.

[*Goes towards the table.*] What house was he talking about?

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, a kind of Home that he and Pastor Manders want to set up.

OSWALD.

It will burn down like the other.

MRS. ALVING.

What makes you think so?

OSWALD.

Everything will burn. All that recalls father's memory is doomed. Here am I, too, burning down.

[REGINA *starts and looks at him.*

MRS. ALVING.

Oswald! You oughtn't to have remained so long down there, my poor boy.

OSWALD.

[*Sits down by the table.*] I almost think you are right.

MRS. ALVING.

Let me dry your face, Oswald; you are quite wet.
[*She dries his face with her pocket-handkerchief.*

OSWALD.

[*Stares indifferently in front of him.*] Thanks, mother.

MRS. ALVING.

Are you not tired, Oswald? Should you like to sleep?

OSWALD.

[*Nervously.*] No, no—not to sleep! I never sleep. I only pretend to. [*Sadly.*] That will come soon enough.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Looking sorrowfully at him.*] Yes, you really are ill, my blessëd boy.

REGINA.

[*Eagerly.*] Is Mr. Alving ill?

OSWALD.

[*Impatiently.*] Oh, do shut all the doors! This killing dread——

MRS. ALVING.

Close the doors, Regina.

[REGINA *shuts them and remains standing by the hall door.* MRS. ALVING *takes her shawl off.* REGINA *does the same.* MRS. ALVING *draws a chair across to* OSWALD'S, *and sits by him.*

MRS. ALVING.

There now! I am going to sit beside you——

OSWALD.

Yes, do. And Regina shall stay here too. Regina shall be with me always. You will come to the rescue, Regina, won't you?

REGINA.

I don't understand——

MRS. ALVING.

To the rescue?

OSWALD.

Yes—when the need comes.

MRS. ALVING.

Oswald, have you not your mother to come to the rescue?

OSWALD.

You? [*Smiles.*] No, mother; that rescue you will never bring me. [*Laughs sadly.*] You! ha ha! [*Looks earnestly at her.*] Though, after all, who ought to do it if not you? [*Impetuously.*] Why can't you say "thou" [1] to me, Regina? Why don't you call me "Oswald"?

REGINA.

[*Softly.*] I don't think Mrs. Alving would like it.

[1] "Sige du"=Fr. *tutoyer.*

MRS. ALVING.

You shall have leave to, presently. And meanwhile sit over here beside us.

[REGINA *seats herself demurely and hesitatingly at the other side of the table.*

MRS. ALVING.

And now, my poor suffering boy, I am going to take the burden off your mind——

OSWALD.

You, mother?

MRS. ALVING.

——all the gnawing remorse and self-reproach you speak of.

OSWALD.

And you think you can do that?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, now I can, Oswald. A little while ago you spoke of the joy of life; and at that word a new light burst for me over my life and everything connected with it.

OSWALD.

[*Shakes his head.*] I don't understand you.

MRS. ALVING.

You ought to have known your father when he was a young lieutenant. He was brimming over with the joy of life!

OSWALD.

Yes, I know he was.

MRS. ALVING.

It was like a breezy day only to look at him. And what exuberant strength and vitality there was in him!

OSWALD.

Well——?

MRS. ALVING.

Well then, child of joy as he was—for he w a s like a child in those days—he had to live at home here in a half-grown town, which had no joys to offer him—only dissipations. He had no object in life—only an official position. He had no work into which he could throw himself heart and soul; he had only business. He had not a single comrade that could realise what the joy of life meant—only loungers and boon-companions——

OSWALD.

Mother——!

MRS. ALVING.

So the inevitable happened.

OSWALD.

The inevitable?

MRS. ALVING.

You told me yourself, this evening, what would become of y o u if you stayed at home.

OSWALD.

Do you mean to say that father——?

MRS. ALVING.

Your poor father found no outlet for the overpowering joy of life that was in him. And I brought no brightness into his home.

OSWALD.

Not even you?

MRS. ALVING.

They had taught me a great deal about duties and so forth, which I went on obstinately believing in. Everything was marked out into duties—into my duties, and his duties, and—I am afraid I made his home intolerable for your poor father, Oswald.

OSWALD.

Why have you never spoken of this in writing to me?

MRS. ALVING.

I have never before seen it in such a light that I could speak of it to you, his son.

OSWALD.

In what light did you see it, then?

MRS. ALVING.

[*Slowly.*] I saw only this one thing: that your father was a broken-down man before you were born.

OSWALD.

[*Softly.*] Ah——!

[*He rises and walks away to the window.*

MRS. ALVING.

And then, day after day, I dwelt on the one thought that by rights Regina should be at home in this house—just like my own boy.

OSWALD.

[*Turning round quickly.*] Regina——!

REGINA.

[*Springs up and asks, with bated breath.*] I——?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, now you know it, both of you.

OSWALD.

Regina!

REGINA.

[*To herself.*] So mother w a s that kind of woman.

MRS. ALVING.

Your mother had many good qualities, Regina.

REGINA.

Yes, but she was one of that sort, all the same. Oh, I've often suspected it; but—— And now, if you please, ma'am, may I be allowed to go away at once?

MRS. ALVING.

Do you really wish it, Regina?

REGINA.

Yes, indeed I do.

MRS. ALVING.

Of course you can do as you like; but——

OSWALD.

[*Goes towards* REGINA.] Go away now? Your place is here.

REGINA.

Merci, Mr. Alving!—or now, I suppose, I may say Oswald. But I can tell you t h i s wasn't at all what I expected.

MRS. ALVING.

Regina, I have not been frank with you——

REGINA.

No, that you haven't indeed. If I'd known that Oswald was an invalid, why—— And now, too, that it can never come to anything serious between us—— I really can't stop out here in the country and wear myself out nursing sick people.

OSWALD.

Not even one who is so near to you?

REGINA.

No, that I can't. A poor girl must make the best of her young days, or she'll be left out in the cold before she knows where she is. And I, too, have the joy of life in me, Mrs. Alving!

MRS. ALVING.

Unfortunately, you have. But don't throw yourself away, Regina.

REGINA.

Oh, what must be, must be. If Oswald takes after his father, I take after my mother, I daresay.—May I ask, ma'am, if Pastor Manders knows all this about me?

MRS. ALVING.

Pastor Manders knows all about it.

REGINA.

[*Busied in putting on her shawl.*] Well then, I'd better make haste and get away by this steamer. The Pastor is such a nice man to deal with; and I certainly think I've as much right to a little of that money as he has —that brute of a carpenter.

MRS. ALVING.

You are heartily welcome to it, Regina.

REGINA.

[*Looks hard at her.*] I think you might have brought me up as a gentleman's daughter, ma'am; it would have suited me better. [*Tosses her head.*] But pooh—what does it matter! [*With a bitter side glance at the corked bottle.*] I may come to drink champagne with gentlefolks yet.

MRS. ALVING.

And if you ever need a home, Regina, come to me.

REGINA.

No, thank you, ma'am. Pastor Manders will look after me, I know. And if the worst comes to the worst, I know of one house where I've every right to a place.

MRS. ALVING.

Where is that?

REGINA.

"Chamberlain Alving's Home."

MRS. ALVING.

Regina—now I see it—you are going to your ruin.

REGINA.

Oh, stuff! Good-bye.

[*She nods and goes out through the hall.*

OSWALD.

[*Stands at the window and looks out.*] Is she gone?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes.

OSWALD.

[*Murmuring aside to himself.*] I think it was a mistake, this.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Goes up behind him and lays her hands on his shoulders.*] Oswald, my dear boy—has it shaken you very much?

OSWALD.

[*Turns his face towards her.*] All that about father, do you mean?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, about your unhappy father. I am so afraid it may have been too much for you.

OSWALD.

Why should you fancy that? Of course it came upon me as a great surprise; but it can make no real difference to me.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Draws her hands away.*] No difference! That your father was so infinitely unhappy!

OSWALD.

Of course I can pity him, as I would anybody else; but——

MRS. ALVING.

Nothing more! Your own father!

OSWALD.

[*Impatiently.*] Oh, "father,"—"father"! I never knew anything of father. I remember nothing about him, except that he once made me sick.

MRS. ALVING.

This is terrible to think of! Ought not a son to love his father, whatever happens?

OSWALD.

When a son has nothing to thank his father for—has never known him? Do you really cling to that old superstition?—you who are so enlightened in other ways?

MRS. ALVING.

Can it be only a superstition——?

OSWALD.

Yes; surely you can see t h a t, mother. It's one of those notions that are current in the world, and so——

MRS. ALVING.

[*Deeply moved.*] Ghosts!

OSWALD.

[*Crossing the room.*] Yes; you may call them ghosts.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Wildly.*] Oswald—then you don't love me, either!

OSWALD.

You I know, at any rate——

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, you know me; but is that all!

OSWALD.

And, of course, I know how fond you are of me, and I can't but be grateful to you. And then you can be so useful to me, now that I am ill.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, cannot I, Oswald? Oh, I could almost bless the illness that has driven you home to me. For I see very plainly that you are not mine: I have to win you.

OSWALD.

[*Impatiently.*] Yes, yes, yes; all these are just so many phrases. You must remember that I am a sick man, mother. I can't be much taken up with other people; I have enough to do thinking about myself.

MRS. ALVING.

[*In a low voice.*] I shall be patient and easily satisfied.

OSWALD.

And cheerful too, mother!

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, my dear boy, you are quite right. [*Goes towards him.*] Have I relieved you of all remorse and self-reproach now?

OSWALD.

Yes, you have. But now who will relieve me of the dread?

MRS. ALVING.

The dread?

OSWALD.

[*Walks across the room.*] Regina could have been got to do it.

MRS. ALVING.

I don't understand you. What is this about dread—and Regina?

OSWALD.

Is it very late, mother?

MRS. ALVING.

It is early morning. [*She looks out through the conservatory.*] The day is dawning over the mountains. And the weather is clearing, Oswald. In a little while you shall see the sun.

OSWALD.

I'm glad of that. Oh, I may still have much to rejoice in and live for——

MRS. ALVING.

I should think so, indeed!

OSWALD.

Even if I can't work——

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, you'll soon be able to work again, my dear boy—now that you haven't got all those gnawing and depressing thoughts to brood over any longer.

OSWALD.

Yes, I'm glad you were able to rid me of all those fancies. And when I've got over this one thing more—— [*Sits on the sofa.*] Now we will have a little talk, mother——

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, let us.

[*She pushes an arm-chair towards the sofa, and sits down close to him.*

OSWALD.

And meantime the sun will be rising. And then you will know all. And then I shall not feel this dread any longer.

MRS. ALVING.

What is it that I am to know?

OSWALD.

[*Not listening to her.*] Mother, did you not say a little while ago, that there was nothing in the world you would not do for me, if I asked you?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, indeed I said so!

OSWALD.

And you'll stick to it, mother?

MRS. ALVING.

You may rely on that, my dear and only boy! I have nothing in the world to live for but you alone.

OSWALD.

Very well, then; now you shall hear—— Mother, you have a strong, steadfast mind, I know. Now you're to sit quite still when you hear it.

MRS. ALVING.

What dreadful thing can it be——?

OSWALD.

You're not to scream out. Do you hear? Do you promise me that? We will sit and talk about it quietly. Do you promise me, mother?

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, yes; I promise. Only speak!

OSWALD.

Well, you must know that all this fatigue—and my inability to think of work—all that is not the illness itself——

MRS. ALVING.

Then what is the illness itself?

OSWALD.

The disease I have as my birthright—[*He points to his forehead and adds very softly*]—is seated here.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Almost voiceless.*] Oswald! No—no!

OSWALD.

Don't scream. I can't bear it. Yes, mother, it is seated here—waiting. And it may break out any day—at any moment.

MRS. ALVING.

Oh, what horror——!

OSWALD.

Now, quiet, quiet. That is how it stands with me——

MRS. ALVING.

[*Springs up.*] It's not true, Oswald! It's impossible! It cannot be so!

OSWALD.

I have had o n e attack down there already. It was soon over. But when I came to know the state I had been in, then the dread descended upon me, raging and ravening; and so I set off home to you as fast as I could.

MRS. ALVING.

Then this is the dread——!

OSWALD.

Yes—it's so indescribably loathsome, you know. Oh, if it had only been an ordinary mortal disease——! For I'm not so afraid of death—though I should like to live as long as I can.

MRS. ALVING.

Yes, yes, Oswald, you must!

OSWALD.

But this is so unutterably loathsome. To become a little baby again! To have to be fed! To have to—— Oh, it's not to be spoken of!

MRS. ALVING.

The child has his mother to nurse him.

OSWALD.

[*Springs up.*] No, never that! That is just what I will not have. I can't endure to think that perhaps I should lie in that state for many years—and get old and grey. And in the meantime you might die and leave me. [*Sits in* MRS. ALVING'S *chair.*] For the doctor said it wouldn't necessarily prove fatal at once. He called it a sort of softening of the brain—or something like that. [*Smiles sadly.*] I think that expression sounds so nice. It always sets me thinking of cherry-coloured velvet—something soft and delicate to stroke.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Shrieks.*] Oswald!

OSWALD.

[*Springs up and paces the room.*] And now you have taken Regina from me. If I could only have had her! She would have come to the rescue, I know.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Goes to him.*] What do you mean by that, my darling boy? Is there any help in the world that I would not give you?

OSWALD.

When I got over my attack in Paris, the doctor told me that when it comes again—and it w i l l come—there will be no more hope.

MRS. ALVING.

He was heartless enough to——

OSWALD.

I demanded it of him. I told him I had preparations to make—— [*He smiles cunningly.*] And so I had. [*He takes a little box from his inner breast pocket and opens it.*] Mother, do you see this?

MRS. ALVING.

What is it?

OSWALD.

Morphia.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Looks at him horror-struck.*] Oswald—my boy!

OSWALD.

I've scraped together twelve pilules——

MRS. ALVING.

[*Snatches at it.*] Give me the box, Oswald.

OSWALD.

Not yet, mother.

[*He hides the box again in his pocket.*

MRS. ALVING.

I shall never survive this!

OSWALD.

It must be survived. Now if I'd had Regina here, I should have told her how things stood with me—and begged her to come to the rescue at the last. She would have done it. I know she would.

MRS. ALVING.

Never!

OSWALD.

When the horror had come upon me, and she saw me lying there helpless, like a little new-born baby, impotent, lost, hopeless—past all saving——

MRS. ALVING.

Never in all the world would Regina have done this!

OSWALD.

Regina would have done it. Regina was so splendidly light-hearted. And she would soon have wearied of nursing an invalid like me.

MRS. ALVING.

Then heaven be praised that Regina is not here!

OSWALD.

Well then, it is you that must come to the rescue, mother.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Shrieks aloud.*] I!

OSWALD.

Who should do it if not you?

MRS. ALVING.

I! your mother!

OSWALD.

For that very reason.

MRS. ALVING.

I, who gave you life!

OSWALD.

I never asked you for life. And what sort of a life have you given me? I will not have it! You shall take it back again!

MRS. ALVING.

Help! Help! [*She runs out into the hall.*

OSWALD.

[*Going after her.*] Do not leave me! Where are you going?

MRS. ALVING.

[*In the hall.*] To fetch the doctor, Oswald! Let me pass!

OSWALD.

[*Also outside.*] You shall not go out. And no one shall come in. [*The locking of a door is heard.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Comes in again.*] Oswald! Oswald—my child!

OSWALD.

[*Follows her.*] Have you a mother's heart for me—and yet can see me suffer from this unutterable dread?

MRS. ALVING.

[*After a moment's silence, commands herself, and says:*] Here is my hand upon it.

MRS. ALVING.

Never!

OSWALD.

When the horror had come upon me, and she saw lying there helpless, like a little new-born baby, in tent, lost, hopeless—past all saving——

MRS. ALVING.

Never in all the world would Regina have don

OSWALD.

Regina would have done it. Regina was didly light-hearted. And she would soon hav of nursing an invalid like me.

MRS. ALVING.

Then heaven be praised that Regina is no

OSWALD.

Well then, it is you that must come mother.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Shrieks aloud.*] I!

OSWALD.

Who should do it if not you?

MRS. ALVING.

I! your mother!

OSWALD.

For that very reason.

OSWALD.

Will you——?

MRS. ALVING.

If it should ever be necessary. But it will never be necessary. No, no; it is impossible.

OSWALD.

Well, let us hope so. And let us live together as long as we can. Thank you, mother.

[*He seats himself in the arm-chair which* MRS. ALVING *has moved to the sofa. Day is breaking. The lamp is still burning on the table.*

MRS. ALVING.

[*Drawing near cautiously.*] Do you feel calm now?

OSWALD.

Yes.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Bending over him.*] It has been a dreadful fancy of yours, Oswald—nothing but a fancy. All this excitement has been too much for you. But now you shall have a long rest; at home with your mother, my own blessëd boy. Everything you point to you shall have, just as when you were a little child.—There now. The crisis is over. You see how easily it passed! Oh, I was sure it would.—And do you see, Oswald, what a lovely day we are going to have? Brilliant sunshine! Now you can really see your home.

[*She goes to the table and puts out the lamp. Sunrise. The glacier and the snow-peaks in the background glow in the morning light.*

OSWALD.

[*Sits in the arm-chair with his back towards the landscape, without moving. Suddenly he says:*] Mother, give me the sun.

MRS. ALVING.

[*By the table, starts and looks at him.*] What do you say?

OSWALD.

[*Repeats, in a dull, toneless voice.*] The sun. The sun.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Goes to him.*] Oswald, what is the matter with you?

OSWALD.

[*Seems to shrink together in the chair; all his muscles relax; his face is expressionless, his eyes have a glassy stare.*]

MRS. ALVING.

[*Quivering with terror.*] What is this? [*Shrieks.*] Oswald! what is the matter with you? [*Falls on her knees beside him and shakes him.*] Oswald! Oswald! look at me! Don't you know me?

OSWALD.

[*Tonelessly as before.*] The sun.—The sun.

MRS. ALVING.

[*Springs up in despair, entwines her hands in her hair and shrieks.*] I cannot bear it! [*Whispers, as though*

petrified] I cannot bear it! Never! [*Suddenly.*] Where has he got them? [*Fumbles hastily in his breast.*] Here! [*Shrinks back a few steps and screams:*] No; no; no!—Yes!—No; no!

[*She stands a few steps away from him with her hands twisted in her hair, and stares at him in speechless horror.*

OSWALD.

[*Sits motionless as before and says.*] The sun.—The sun.

THE END.

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